The Winning of the Soul

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THE WINNING OF THE SOUL

And Other Sermons

THE

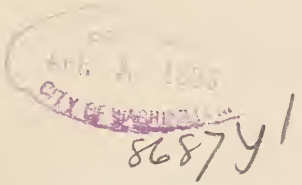
WINNING OF THE SOUL

And Other Sermons

BY

LEIGHTON PARKS

RECTOR OF EMMANUEL CHURCH, BOSTON



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To the Memory

OF

PHILLIPS BROOKS,

THE ILLUSTRIOUS PREACHER, THE NOBLE BISHOP,
THE GREAT-HEARTED FRIEND, THE MAN OF GOD,

THIS VOLUME

(*The title of which he chose*)

IS, WITH LOVING REVERENCE,
DEDICATED.

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I.

THE WINNING OF THE SOUL.

In your patience ye shall win your souls.
St. Luke, xxi. 19.

IN the words which precede our text Jesus has been pointing out to the disciples what they must expect to endure. Indeed, in all his dealings with his disciples he never failed to point out to them that the Christian life did not mean escape from the losses, the perplexities, the trials, and the sorrows that were to be found in the world at large. All that He said was, that out of that sorrow there should come a joy which no man could take from the loving soul, and that in the midst of it we shall by patience win our souls.

The expression is a striking one, — much more forcible than that with which we are familiar in our King James version of the Bible, where it says, "In your patience possess ye your souls." Here we are told that by patience we shall *win* our souls, so putting before us at once the meaning of life as a

struggle, and also the end and object of life, the true prize after which men should reach.

And does not that bring our Christian life, my friends, into harmony with what we are learning every day about the mystery of life wherever it is manifested on our planet? Every tree that to-day is putting forth its leaves anew, every flower that to-day opens its calyx with new beauty that it may refresh the heart of man, has passed through a great struggle of which we think but little, and yet a struggle which began at the very moment the seed was planted in the ground. The meaning of the fruit upon the tree in its season, and the meaning of the flower upon the stem in its appointed hour, is the victory in the long battle for life, so that every flower that we shall pass on our homeward way to-day is saying to us, if we can only understand its meaning, "In my patience I have won my life."

It brings, I say, the Christian life into harmony with the meaning of life wherever we find it. Life is a long struggle, and that which, as we say, survives, is the particular manifestation of life which has won *itself* in the struggle for existence. I think it is well for us to look at this aspect of our Christian life from time to time, because there are so many different theories about the meaning and object of religion.

Men often think about religion very much as they think about a fortune. There are some men who

labor day by day, not because they love work, but because they fear the penalty of idleness. It is the spur of want that drives them to labor. So there are Christians who think of religion as a thing that it is desirable for them to participate in, not because they love it, but because they are afraid if they neglect it some penalty of awful punishment will fall upon them some day beyond the grave. That is the lowest form of looking upon work, or of looking at religion; and yet, just as we would all say that it is better for a man to go to his labor day after day, driven by the goad of want, rather than to live in idleness, so we say it is better for a man to lead an upright life driven there by fear than not to live an upright life at all, because it is always something for a man to form good habits, even if the motive that led him to those habits be not the highest.

Or, again, there are men who work day by day, not because they are driven by the fear of want, but because they love the wages that they receive. That is a higher form than the other, and yet it is not the highest. And so there are men in the Church, who are living what they call a religious life, who are upright, who are denying themselves now, who are following a certain course that is supposed to be safe, the object they have in mind being to get a reward some time hereafter. Some day they hope that God will pay them for all that they have given up for his

sake; they dream of standing some day in heaven and hearing God say to them, "You gave up a great deal for me. I understood that you did not love me, that it was no pleasure for you to commune with me in prayer, that you hated to go to church, but inasmuch as you have been a religious man, I will now reward you by giving you a place in the kingdom, where you can do your own pleasure throughout all eternity." Now that also is not a very high notion of religion, and yet we say again that it is better for a man to conform to those standards that the Church has found by long experience to be helpful to the soul, even though he have no higher notion than to be paid by God for doing his duty, than not to conform, and to be careless and indifferent, because he is always in an atmosphere where it is possible for him to feel the influence of a nobler and better life.

And lastly, just as there are men who are no longer driven to their work by any fear of want, and who have passed far beyond the position where their work can be estimated and paid for by wages, but who do their work simply and solely because they know that in so doing they are fulfilling themselves, developing themselves to the highest degree possible, and so love and rejoice in their work without any thought of fear or favor, — so there are men who are leading a religious life without the fear of hell to deter them, without the promise of heaven to pay them, but because

they have come to love the character of the Lord Jesus Christ, and desire to attain unto that character, at least in part, before their days are ended. And that, my friends, is the highest and noblest thought that a man can have of religion.

And yet there are men who say, Is not that a subtle form of selfishness? When we say that the object of our life is to make the most of ourselves, to be the best we know how to be, are we not then really selfish? Now of course it is difficult to answer such a question as that, because we are using the word "self" in two senses. And in order to clear our minds of that sophistry which I know perplexes certain among you here, it is desirable for us to ask ourselves what we mean when we speak of self.

There is in every one of us a double self. There is a self that belongs to the animal nature, out of which we have been drawn by this long process which we call creation, or evolution. And, on the other hand, there is in every one of us that higher, nobler self which is allied to God, that reaches up to God, that finds its joy in communion with God. Now, then, any man who sacrifices that higher nature which speaks to him through the voice of duty, and yields to the pleasures of life that manifest themselves in his lower nature, is a selfish man. The man who will sacrifice his friend, his family, everything that ought

to appeal to his higher nature, — country, duty, conscience, — for the pleasure of the moment, to increase the satisfaction of his lower nature, is a selfish man; and so too the man who is always on a lookout for the things that will please that lower nature is essentially selfish, even though he be not conscious of wrong-doing. But when we speak of a man's devoting the energy of his life to the enlargement and the deepening and the heightening of that nobler self within him which is allied to God, we cannot, without a misuse of words, speak of that as selfish; for while it is a part of self, it is far more a part of God, and the man who is trying to do his duty and to make the most of himself is really drawing nearer and nearer to that point of which St. Paul speaks as the summit of human endeavor, when a man can say, "I, this old self, am dead, and my life, my higher self, is hid with Christ in God." To have the vision of the perfect life as revealed in Jesus Christ, and to draw near to that life and make it one's own, is what I think Jesus meant when He spoke of winning the soul, of laying hold of the true life that belongs to every one of us, but which no one of us has really and altogether possessed.

And now we have to ask ourselves, If this be true, what is the process by which the result desired is reached? And here we have the story of the Gospel

to help us. That story that tells us that man does not have to climb up into heaven to win God, but that God has descended to human life; that every human life belongs to God, and from the very moment the child is born the Spirit of God is resting upon it, striving to make it more and more like Jesus Christ. If the story of that Gospel be true, we can understand why Christ laid such emphasis upon patience, — "In your patience ye shall win your souls," — because all that the soul has to do for its salvation is to rest patiently in the midst of the perplexities and sorrows and trials of life, and allow the Spirit of God to incarnate itself in it, according to its capacity to receive it, as the Divine life was incarnated in Jesus in the perfection in which humanity can receive it. For God is striving with us every day to bring us to the knowledge of Himself as revealed in Jesus Christ, that we seeing that life in Jesus Christ may think of it, not as an exceptional life that has burst in upon humanity, but may think of it as the normal life, the life that God in his creation of humanity intended and desired every man, according to his capacity, and according to the circumstances of his time, to live. And so we win that life as the artist wins his picture. He has a vision, and yet it is dim and uncertain, but by patience, by waiting, by allowing the vision to descend until it fills his being, little by little he is able to express it in some outward form, and in that day

the artist has won his picture. The picture was floating before him as a cloud, that sometimes seemed to take shape and then again melted into thin air; but at last by patient waiting the vision descended, incarnated itself in the man's life, and he was able to express it, and then, but not until then, the picture was his.

Now I ask you, for a moment, to turn with me to certain illustrations of this truth that perhaps will be helpful to us in our daily lives.

Look first for a moment at the sorrows of life. We all know, when sorrows come upon us, that what we wish is comfort, — the comfort of God. And nothing is more common in such an hour than for people to be surprised that the comfort of God does not come instantly after the sorrow has fallen upon them. It is one of the great perplexities of life. It causes so much unhappiness. Men and women that have served God and loved God, and lived the Christian life, are compassed about with sorrow. Then they expect to know the comfort of God at once, and sometimes it is so, but not often. Now, why is it? Is it not this, my friends, — that if what we have said before is true, if God is incarnating himself in the life of every one of us, then the Divine life must, in order for that incarnation, subject itself to the laws and conditions of human life, one of which is time? We might as well ask why,

if in Jesus "dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily," He did not, when He lay in his mother's arms a little child, speak as a man, work miracles with those baby fingers, and convert the world by the shining out of the Divine effulgence from his infant face. It was because it was a true Incarnation. It was not an Avatar, a sudden descent of God into some particular vessel of mankind, in order that the Divine power might for a moment be seen, startling and terrifying humanity. No, it was an Incarnation, a participation in human life by the Divine life, and it expanded as Jesus "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." Now, if the incarnation of Jesus required time to work out to the full the meaning of God in man, how much more must it be so with you and me. If we can be patient, if we can wait, if we can hold back the rash judgment that ascends the throne and condemns God without a hearing, if we can rest until the voice of God can be heard upon the dull ear, then in our patience we shall win our souls; we shall know the comfort of God, which is the power and glory of human life.

Or, again, in the trials of life how hard it is to be patient, to wait. How hard it is to believe that those who trouble and perplex our lives can have any good in them. We make a great resolution, we say, "I will live differently in my family, I will behave towards those who perplex and trouble me in a dif-

ferent way from that in which I behaved before"; and then in a moment the good resolution is shattered, because we cannot believe that there is any good in a life that perplexes us, and the subtle suggestion of the tempter is heard, saying, "Did not God make me to fulfil my life? Why should I alone of all God's creatures suffer and be disregarded and despised? Why should I alone be cut off from happiness and joy and the fulfilment of the best that is in me? Why should I submit when submission seems to have no outlet, when submission will do no good, so far as I can see, to any other soul? Why should not I be free to live my life as it seems best to me to live it, and to make the most of myself, which I believe God desires?" Ay, God desires us to make the most of ourselves. God desires us to win our souls, to lay hold upon the Divine life. But it is not by disregarding the duties of life, it is not by setting ourselves free from the trammels that seem to prevent a larger liberty, it is not by taking life into one's own hand, that the true life of the soul is to be won. It is in the patience that waits upon the Lord. When you hear the voice saying, Lo, your true life is here, or it is there, believe it not. It is in the midst of your trials; for wherever there is room for sacrifice, there is room for God.

Lastly, it is true of those perplexities that arise about the knowledge of God. A man or woman has

passed on through childhood and early youth without any thought of God or his revelation in nature, or in the Bible, or in the spirit of man, and at last the soul becomes conscious that it holds relation to Something that it does not see, nor touch, nor hear. "Now, then," says the soul, "why is it, if there be any reality answering to this suspicion of my nature that there is a God, — why is it that instantly my soul is not filled with the absolute certainty of the existence of God, and the joy that should flow from communion with Him?" Sometimes it is suggested to such a soul that God is angry, — that because it has neglected God, now God will neglect it. That is heathenism; no matter who says it, or where it is said, it is heathenism. God is our Father, and the very instant that we turn to Him, He will reveal Himself to us to the utmost of our capacity to receive Him. But it is not strange that the arm that has lain long unused in sickness and at last lifts itself up and tries to grasp one of the many handles of life, should find that the fingers tremble and the grasp is infirm. Nor is it strange that the soul that has not known God in early childhood and in the glow of youth should find that it takes time to enter into intimacy with God, just as it takes time to enter into the deepest and truest intimacy with a noble human soul. But if we will be patient, if we will wait upon the Lord, then, my friends, we shall win that

knowledge of God which is the life and the joy of the soul.

Can we not see, then, what it is that Jesus is trying to say to us? It is that life is one long struggle, and that we need not suppose that happiness, peace, and joy are to come instantly upon our life. No, life is one long struggle, and the end and object of it is to win the character of Jesus Christ. That is not to dress like Jesus Christ, nor to try to look like Jesus Christ, nor to speak his words or to eat and drink and live as He lived. Not so; but to incarnate in our own life, in the school, in the business, in the home, in the church, everywhere, the same Divine Spirit that made Jesus the glory and the beauty and the power of mankind. That is the end and object of life. It is not to gain more money than our neighbors; it is not to have larger knowledge than our neighbors; it is not to receive the applause of the multitude; it is to win our souls, and that is to win God.

And if we once set that before us, then go on to the second point, and remember that God is to be won, in comfort, and in knowledge, and in the power for sacrifice, only by patience. If we take that view of life, my friends, and set before us the true object of life, the winning of a soul, and determine that

that soul shall be won in the patience that waits for the power of God to manifest itself in our lives, we shall have a clew that will lead us through the darkness of sorrow, and through the agony of sacrifice, and through the mystery of learning, until we hear that word which will be the announcement of no outward reward, but simply the acknowledgment of a life that has won itself: "Well done, good and faithful servant; you have endured to the end and are saved. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."

II.

THE POTTER'S WHEEL.

The word which came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying, Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause thee to hear my words. Then I went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels. —JEREMIAH, xviii. 1–3.

THE potter's house has been used as a parable for more than three thousand years. It had been used in Egypt long before Jeremiah, and it was used in Persia long after him; it was revived by St. Paul, and it is in the poetry of to-day. The word of the Lord which came to the prophet through the consideration of that simple scene was sufficient to suggest the answer to the problem of his day. The prophet went into the potter's house perplexed about a problem that has largely lost interest for us, first, because we have become familiar with the answer to it, and secondly, because that answer only prepared the way for the entrance of another problem to the solution of which no man can be indifferent.

Does God rule the nations of the earth? When men set themselves in opposition to what are believed to be

the laws of righteousness, will the nation prosper as it would have done if righteousness had been its aim? That was the question which perplexed the prophet. But when he looked on the potter and saw him work on the wheels, saw him fashion a vessel, and then noted that, when the vessel proved unfit for the use to which it was designed, it was broken and the fragments mixed with new clay to make another vessel, he rose to the thought of God, and became convinced that God does the same. If the nation which he has chosen does not show itself fitted for the work, it is broken and mingled with another, and out of the conglomerate the needed form is made. God's work, he believed, was not frustrated by man's sin, only the nation which set itself against God was broken.

I say that we have nowadays but slight interest in that problem, for we are perplexed by a deeper. This one concerns the individual soul. The interest in the individual arose in history, we may say, with the introduction of the religion of Jesus. It was obscured and came to the front again at the Reformation, was again obscured by the shadow of dogmatism and the rise of modern nationalities, but it broke out with fearful signs in the French Revolution, and is to-day the only question which really interests man. Does God deal with the individual soul, and if so how? Can we answer these questions? Not as we might

wish, perhaps, but in part at least. The parable of the potter's house has not exhausted its significance. Let us too arise and go down into his house to-day. It may be that there the Lord will cause us to hear his words.

Somehow the human mind came to suspect that each man was in direct and intimate relationship with God, that he was dealing with him as truly as if there were no other being in the universe. Every word of Jesus tended to deepen that impression. He used strong words to express his own confidence in this belief: "The very hairs of your head are all numbered. . . . Not one sparrow falleth to the ground without your Heavenly Father. Are ye not of more value than they?" As long as the human mind was childlike, that is to say, as long as it received simple impressions without trying to analyze their origin or the laws of their action, doubt did not appear. But it was inevitable that questions should be asked and answers expected. It is not my purpose to ask you to consider the answers which have been given to the great question concerning God's dealing with the soul. I wish rather to go with you into the potter's house, and see what we can see for ourselves.

The first thing which attracts our notice is the clay. It is of different qualities. Some of it is very

pure and pliable, other is too soft — "fat" the potter calls it — to be used in its present state; some is almost white, and will make the finest porcelain, other has such an excess of iron that it will make only colored ware; some is doubtful, — it will form, but it will twist or crack in the firing.

The interpretation of the parable is simple. The clay of the potter is human nature, good, bad, and indifferent. Is there any of it so bad that it cannot be used? Not if it be clay. There is no clay that the potter cannot employ. He cannot use stone, and he cannot make a vase of water. But clay of any sort he can make something of. Let us fix our mind upon that to begin with. No man is so bad that something cannot be made of him. There are men so hard that they seem to be stone; there are others so flabby that it seems as if they never could hold together on the revolving wheel; still, if they be men, something can be done. It may not be possible to make poets and statesmen of them, any more than it is possible to make Sèvres china of Jersey clay; but they can be moulded and fixed into some form of usefulness as long as they are men.

The difficulty, however, which arises in some men's minds, even when that is settled, is this: Is not the best what we want? Can we rest satisfied with any dealing with human nature which leaves the large majority of the race on a low plane, and exalts only a

chosen few? Now, if we cannot, how can the Creator? Must we not suppose that he too is disappointed in his work, and that he is limited in his operations? How then can we believe in One who is omnipotent? Is not he too limited by necessity, and are we not right in saying that that which determines character is the previous condition of the material with which God works? And does not this lead finally to disbelief in God? It certainly does lead to a disbelief in such a God as we have fancied. But it may lead to a belief in a nobler God than that. The potter puts his hand on a lump of clay. Now, we say, we know what that is to be. He can never make pure porcelain out of it. Well, who said that he intended to? Who told us that he tried to and failed? Who taught us that he wanted to, and found when the clay was in his hands that he must only do the best he could under the circumstances? Did not the potter bring the clay into the house? Did he not know what he would find there? Have we discovered a secret which he did not know? Not so. The *fineness* of the pottery is determined by the quality of the clay, and so is its *color*, but not its *form*. That is the work of the potter alone. It is in that that we see the power of his genius. And the coarser the material and the cruder its color, the more are we led to marvel at the genius and the goodness which was content to embody itself in such material. Let us learn of

God, not teach him. The more we study human nature, the more we become convinced that God never intended all men to be alike. "In a great house there are vessels of honor and vessels of dishonor," — that is, nothing useless, only some better fitted than others for particular purposes. The more we study sociology, the more we feel convinced that it would be a fatal thing to have a town with but a single industry, — a nation with no variety of employments, — a world perfectly homogeneous.

But it may be said, Does this apply to moral qualities? Can man be content with any but the highest for himself or for those he loves? No. If a man is discontented with that to which he has attained, it is because he has not answered God's purpose; but as for his judgment on his neighbors it has not much value. We all admit that it is not possible for every man to have all the moral qualities in an equal degree. The important thing in life is that each man should be *faithful* in the employment of those which he has. It is with individuals as with nations. It was not necessary that David should have the quality of mercy largely developed, or that Rebecca should understand the importance of truth. The important thing was that David should be loyal to Him who made him a king, and that Rebecca should save the timid boy with whom was the promise of the covenant. Do not

misunderstand me. I do not say that, if these truths had been revealed to them, they would not have been as morally bound to observe them as we are; I only say that there was no need that they should have been revealed. Indeed, we may go farther, and say that they could not be revealed. We say that we cannot and God ought not to be content with anything less than the best. But what is best? Is it best that all the clay in the world should be turned into Dresden china? By no means. What is best is that there should be a great variety fitted for different purposes. There are certain virtues which would be out of place in certain conditions of civilization, — that is, in certain individuals. Refined sensibility would be as embarrassing to a frontiersman as a carriage hung on delicate springs. What is needed is that he should be brave and just. We say that it is not as high a type as the courteous gentleman who would shrink from profanity as from physical pollution. But the test is to be found not in the quality of the virtue, but in the faithfulness with which it is used. Two things then ought to be learned from a consideration of the clay in the potter's house. The first is, that God is dealing with men as individuals indeed, yet not as isolated beings, but as members of a great family. It is to the advantage of the family that they should differ, and it is to their own advantage too. This difference in the clay, of which we

have many theories, such as the law of heredity, or the influence of environment, are the conditions which God himself has ordained. That is the great mystery of creation, that God should embody himself in such material. But it is a mystery which has nothing discouraging about it until we separate it from God. All creation is self-limitation. The artist has an emotion, then a thought, then a will to embody that thought, but in the embodiment he has limited himself, he has submitted to certain conditions. So does God. He can work, we may reverently say, only under those conditions. But we must not forget that they are of his own creation. He is working in clay. He must make what the clay is capable of expressing, only there is no clay which is not capable on a higher or lower plane, of being conformed to the image of Jesus Christ, — no man incapable of being filled with the spirit of God's Son, and expressing that spirit according to his peculiar capacity and subject to the conditions of the time in which he lives.

The second thing which we see in the potter's house is the wheel. On it the lump is placed, and the unseen foot presses the treadle, and the wheel revolves. About the wheel, too, men have formed a theory. First they began with the clay, — the substance of human nature. And there was evolved many a philosophy. But what is its value to-day? The study

of metaphysics is greatly discredited. It has produced the spirit of agnosticism. Men, weary with speculations which lead to nothing, have said there is nothing to be known of the constitution of the clay nor the mind of the worker. And they are right: there is nothing to be known by the exclusive study of the human mind. And so they have turned to the study of the revolutions of the wheel.

Ten years ago it seemed as if the study of nature would lead to such definite answers to the problem of life that the world was full of prophecies as to what the reorganized society would be like in the light of the new knowledge. The world was as full of hope, as sure of being delivered from the bondage of superstition, as it was in the first flush of the French Revolution. The revolving plane of nature, men cried, will give us the solution, not only of man's origin, but also of his destiny. Look at what can be seen, said the student of nature, instead of speculating upon what cannot be seen. The clay is on the wheel, and it turns and turns, and slackens not its speed, still less stops in answer to curses or groans. If you ask whence came the clay, the answer is the wheel made it. If men asked how it took forms of beauty, the answer was given by pointing out that, if the wheel went slower by one revolution in a thousand years, the thing of beauty would be marred; that if it increased its speed but the

fraction of a second, the clay would be destroyed. The wheel never changes. Now its motion soothes like the lullaby of an infant, soon it will be like the dance of the wedding guests, the passionate rush of youth will follow, and then the slow sinking of old age. One man cries, It is good to be alive, and another moans for rest. But these are only phases of the clay; the wheel remains unchanged and unchangeable.

This theory had an array of facts few could discover, but which every man could appreciate as soon as they were explained to him. For a while, men stood and gazed in wonder. Some were fascinated by the sight of things as old as the world, but which had never been noticed before, and found their joy in looking. Others boasted of the overthrow of faith. Some looked on with unspeakable anguish at the destruction of man's noblest hopes. Well, how does the case stand to-day? Men have roused themselves, and asked at length, What moves the wheel? Such a simple, natural question! But no one can answer it. "We do not know," say the wisest students of nature. "Every increase of knowledge only serves to widen the surrounding abyss of nescience. And what is more, nothing can ever be known of that secret, for we have learned enough of nature to know that no study of it will tell us any of those things which we would like to know." The study of the clay was

formulated in metaphysics, and led to agnosticism. The study of the wheel has done the same. There are, however, certain impressions which the mind has received from the study of nature which nothing will ever shake. The first is the universality of law, — that nothing happens anywhere except in accordance with invariable rules, which are never changed. The baby cries for the moon, but the moon sails on regardless of its puny rage. The boy chafes at the shortness of his holiday, but the sun goes down at its appointed time. The thief utters a charm to cloud the night, but moon and stars shine brilliantly. Old age steals on, and sudden death appears, and nothing you or I can do will change the relentless turning of the wheel. To-day, the sunlight strikes on us as the wheel turns by an open window; to-morrow, the darkness covers us as the wheel goes through the shadow. No need to dwell on it. Life is governed by unchanging and unchangeable law. That is the one thing we have learned from the study of nature, and almost the only thing we have learned which throws any light on the great problem which perplexes us.

Is this all that can be learned from the potter's house? So many tell us, but as we turn away there comes, we cannot tell how, a feeling that we have not seen all. And to me that is after all the greatest mystery of life. How did it ever come to pass that

man should dream that there is more to be known than can be seen? How did he ever imagine, when everything that he sees is against it, that he should live when he was dead? That is the mystery. From what does it arise? How is it that I, a creature of a moment, without power, an infinitesimal particle in the universe, should come to believe that this is not the whole story of my life, but that there is a hand upon me fashioning me and moulding me, making me walk in the paths which I would not, and comforting me, and filling me with hope? It is because of something else which is in the potter's house. That which the prophet saw first of all: "I saw the *potter* work a work on the wheels."

He saw what we may see, the potter place a lump upon the wheel and the wheel revolve; he saw the hands clasp it, and the clay begin to move. As we look to-day at such a sight, it seems as if the clay were doing all, and the potter's hand only followed its motion. If, however, we look more closely, we shall see that it is not the clay which works. There are two forces at work upon it; the one is the *revolving wheel*, and the other is the *moulding hand*. The force of the wheel alone would scatter the clay, the power of the hand alone would crush it. Its form is the resultant of these two forces. The wheel makes the conditions under which the hand can best work.

The hand does not move and go behind the lump, as it seems. The hand remains still, the eye is on the clay, and when the position is right it is touched, and so formed. He lays his hand upon it, and we hold our breath. Surely he will crush it! No, the weight is just enough to cause the shapeless mass to bosom out and embody the line of beauty. He touches it with his finger, and, as if in answer to a fairy's wand, it rises into the air, and rises more, till it seems as if it were about to snap and break from the base. But it does not. It has stopped as if by enchantment, and we see that a slender neck has been formed, round which a garland shall twine by and by. It is not finished yet. The finger goes in, and then the hand, and the small vessel expands until through the thin wall we see the nimble fingers of the potter working through the darkness that light may shine through the work of his hands. And now the hand is drawn out, and the slender neck contracts again as the fingers pass, and the vase is almost done. The wheel runs slow, and the potter cuts with his sharp knife the thing of beauty from the unused clay, smiles, and sighs as he lays it away, — smiles to see this new thing of beauty, but sighs to think of the danger of its breaking in the furnace which must try it.

That too the prophet saw, as we may. The vase so delicate and tender must be walled up and left to show whether it can bear the strain and abide in the

house forever, or whether it will crack or twist, and defeat the work wrought on the wheels.

It is on that that our eyes must be fixed if we would gain comfort and hope. It is on that that the eyes of thoughtful men must be fixed before we can have a philosophy of life. The study of the clay will show us only the limitations of the clay. The study of the wheel will teach us nothing but the conditions under which the clay is moulded. The contemplation of the hand alone will yield nothing but unsubstantial dreams. The result of the first has been formulated in philosophy, of the second in science, of the third in theology. The first and the third have for the moment lost much of their former interest. The day is coming when the other shall lose interest too. Should there ever be a complete philosophy of life, it must be from the combination of what each thing in the potter's house has to teach us. The clay we can analyze. The wheel we can watch. How can we learn from the hand ? Only by taking the testimony which the clay itself bears to its own experience, only by noting the effects produced on the human soul by the awful, mysterious experiences of life. The soul believes that it is being moulded by a hand, — believes it so strongly that there are times when it is tempted to deny that there are any limitations or any laws by which the work is being done. If we

look at any soul as it passes through life, we see that no other explanation of that which comes to it will satisfy the mind which asks for a reason and judges of the value of the answer. The limitations of your life and mine were fixed long before we saw the light. We have learned that to begin with. The experiences which come to you and me are not made to break in upon the course of this world, violating the law which governs life. Birth and death, joy and sorrow, unbounded hope and overwhelming disappointment, strength and sickness, — these are the things which come to all, the good and the bad alike. They come by rule. There is an undeviating law which governs life. That too we have learned. Where then is Providence? That is to be seen in the *moulding* of our life. God's hand is on us, and in the turn of the wheel which brings joy he lifts us up, and in the turn which brings calamity he moulds us for some use.

That is what men forget. The race has always believed that there was overruling, but supposed that the proof of it was to be found in the events of life, and then was dumfounded when these events proved different from what had been expected. It is not in the *events*, but in the *result* of them, that we shall find the proof of the hand of God. That thought frees us at once from the deadness of spirit which comes with the knowledge of inexorable law. If there be a hand fashioning, we may be sure that it chose the clay to

make that which it knew the clay could become. If there is a hand moulding our souls, it must be that these laws were prepared by it because He knew that no condition which those laws produce is unfavorable to the development of the life which He loves. And more than that: if there be laws for the clay and laws for the wheel, there are likewise, we may be sure, laws for the moulding hand as well. What are these laws? That we do not know, and that is why there is so much confusion and fear. It is that confusion which gives the power to attacks on religion, and enables the "religious novel" to sell. Men hope to have the confusion cleared away, and are ready to accept any theory which seems to be simple. Now the simplest of all is that there is no such thing as providence, that "miracle is the child of mendacity." But it is *too* simple. Suppose there are laws of the hand; suppose there are laws of the spirit; then it would be strange indeed if they did not make themselves manifest in human life. There are laws of matter, and there are laws of mind. Before mind appeared, this world was one thing and that the simple expression of those laws. But when mind appeared, it became another thing, for the laws of mind manifested themselves in the material world. Yet, strictly speaking, each such manifestation was a miracle, that is, the sign of the operation of a higher force than was at work in the material itself. Agriculture and civiliza-

tion are perpetual miracles; that is, they are effects produced by the action of laws which do not reside in the material which they affect. The building of a house is a miracle, and so is the warming and the lighting of it. Nature would never have done the one or the other. The natural action of the laws of matter would never have produced these results. We are so familiar with these results that we do not consider how they arose, yet the key to the mystery is to be found there. Now, if there are laws of the spirit, should we not expect spiritual manifestations in the intellectual and material life? The difficulty here lies in the fact that we have so little familiarity with the spiritual life that, when we hear of such things, we say it is contrary to all experience. Nature would never have done so. Mind would never have done so. Both are true. But if neither the material nor the intellectual are the highest manifestations of life, if the moral and spiritual be higher, and we have but slight experience of their power, is it an answer to say such and such things are contrary to experience? Whose experience? The experience of Jesus? Are we sure that we know the law of the life of Jesus? If not, it is neither philosophical nor scientific to assume that we are in a position to judge of what its manifestations ought to be.

I mention this, not to enter into any discussion of

the so called historical miracles, but simply to point out that the great discovery of the universality of law does not in any way overthrow the belief in a never failing Providence, nor affect what we sometimes unhappily name "special providences."

Before we end, there is one thing more to be said, and that is, that the parable is incomplete in one respect. There are times when we can speak of humanity as clay in the hands of the potter, but we all know that this human clay has the power of resistance. It can tear itself from the moulding hand, it can fatten itself in sin, so as to frustrate the work on the wheels. It can fail to co-operate with the potter, and so, though it take a pleasing form for a moment, be ruined in the furnace which shall try every man of what sort he is. So the house of the potter has an exhortation for us, as well as an object lesson. What it is saying to every man is, Do not *resist*, but *co-operate*.

Look at the clay: it is yourself, it has its limitations. Two things are before you when that truth has entered into your soul. You may despair; you may throw away your life because it is physically, mentally, or morally incomplete, or marred. Or you may submit. You may learn to be content; you may rise to thank God that you are what you are. You may be made useful, and in the eyes of the Master beautiful, because expressing the love of God.

Look on the wheel. It is the revolving life, with all its manifold experiences. They may be so joyous that we forget that we are here for a purpose, and pass the time in the enjoyment of things which unfit us for beauty or power. They may be hard and bitter, and you may upbraid God. You may say, I have been a religious man, and look at me, old and poor and sad! We may cry out, not "What advantage hath the Jew?" but "What advantage hath the Christian?" We may think of God as having changed the course of the world to afflict us, or we may curse him because he did not change it and so save us from this cross. But there is another possibility, and that is to say, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" Are not these laws, which He established and which now bear heavy on me, for a purpose? We may go farther, and say, "The consolations of God are not small with us." We may hear the voice of the Apostle saying, "My brethren, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial as if some strange thing happened to *you;* there hath no trial taken you but such as is common to man." What you suffer untold millions have suffered, and many shall suffer before God's work is done. Jesus and the two thieves suffered alike, but Jesus felt the hand of the Father on him, and so at last did one of the thieves, and that knowledge is the gateway to Paradise; for the consciousness of sonship is the object of life.

He wrought a work on the wheels. Let nothing shake that faith. Submit your souls to God. Do not ask Him to make you great, only to make you useful. Do not ask Him to change the course of this world that you may be happy, but only that you may not be confounded.

The hand of the potter is on your life, moulding it in the midst of manifold experiences. It is the hand of your Father, — the same hand which was on Jesus, and moulded that sweet Jewish boy into the perfect manifestation of His own glory. Remember that, and He will make you a thing of beauty, fit for the Master's use.

III.

THE KILLING OF THE SON.

Hear another parable: There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country. And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Again, he sent other servants more than the first; and they did unto them likewise. But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him. — St. Matthew, xxi. 33–39.

THE first thing that strikes us, I think, in reading this parable, is the great liberality of the householder. It is evident that that was intended to catch our notice; for we are not simply told that there was a certain householder which had a vineyard which he let out to husbandmen, but we are told all that he did for it. He digged a winepress, and he built a hedge

about it; he arranged it in every way so that the work might be easily and profitably done, and then, naturally, he looked to receive the fruits of it.

And the second thing, I think, that we note, is the variety of the appeals that are made. Again and again messengers are sent to ask for the fruit of the vineyard, that belonged to the lord thereof; and notwithstanding the fact that the first servants were maltreated, other servants are sent, more (that is, more honorable) than the first, and they received the same treatment. And then he only makes one more appeal, saying, "I will send my son; surely they will reverence him when they see him." And he sent his son. So that the second thing, I say, that we note in this passage is the patience of the householder, and the continuousness of the appeal that was made to these wicked men.

Let us look at it this morning, and see what story it has to tell to you and me, — what we may learn from it that will make us better men and women.

In the first place, is not our position very much like that of the men to whom the vineyard was let? Has not much been done for you and me, my friends, so that God has a right to expect a return from us? Any one of us, I think, that will look back over his life, will be inclined to feel that a vast deal of his life was a thing which he had no hand in shaping. The great things that have come to you and me have come,

as we are sometimes tempted to say, by accident. At any rate, however we may explain it, the great things, the most important things, are things that were settled by "some Power not ourselves." We did not choose, I take it, where we would go to school. We did not choose where we would go to college. We did not choose what particular house we would enter into business with. All those things were arranged without our knowledge or consent, and the blessings that have accrued from those first steps in life have come without our foresight. So that every one of us might say, as St. Paul did, "What hast thou that thou didst not receive?"

God, if there be a God, has done great things for you and me, every one of us. The most unfortunate, the most sorrowful, the least successful of any one of us here to-day, — God has been preparing a place for that soul to work that it might develop itself; and he has looked to every one of us here for fruit.

And, again, we are like the men in the parable, inasmuch as the appeals that have been made to us have been various and continuous. If we look into our own lives and consider what God had a right to expect of us, and what the return is that we have made, I think every one of us must be impressed with the patience of the Divine Father. Look at the appeals that have come to us, — God's servants that He has sent to ask for the fruit of the vineyard. Conscience, — which one

of us has not had that messenger knock at the gate, and, being entered, say to us, Thus and thus hast thou done that was wrong. Which of us has not gone and looked over the hedge of the vineyard to see if the master was coming? Who here, even as a little child, has not known the sudden pang, the unexpected sickness, that has brought with it the awful dread of the discovery of that which neither father nor mother knew? What boy has not seen another one speaking to the master, and known what it was to tremble lest that boy might tell all that he knew? Who here has not known the coming of conscience, with its awful warning, with its solemn demand for the fruit of that which God has given us, and which God expects every one of us to render?

No need to dwell upon it. That is one of the fundamental ethical instincts there is no need to argue about. The instant it is mentioned, every one of us can look back over the path we have come and see, perhaps in the past week, or month, or year, or as we glance down the hill that we have climbed, the little boy or the little girl at the bottom of it, fearing because of sin.

And there are other messengers that have come to us. Joy, that has come to our hearts, saying, Now render thanks to God for all that He has done for you. The blessings that He has given you, the joys that He has poured out upon you, the great opportunities that

He has opened to you, — have you been thankful for them? Joy is a messenger that God sends, and says, Give me the fruit of my vineyard.

Or there is another that comes. Opportunity itself, the opening up of a larger possibility for serving God and employing the full activities of our life. Who has not thrilled to that? Who has not known what it was suddenly to have the door thrown open and a new vista opened for the possibility of work, for self-improvement, for doing good to others, and has not felt in that moment that he was near to God, that God is interested in him and has seen fit to send out his messenger to call him, even him, to undertake the great and splendid work of life?

We may not dwell upon it further. Every one of us can look back over his life and find that again and again messengers have come, the messenger of conscience, the messenger of joy, the messenger of opportunity, every one of them saying, Render me the fruit of the vineyard.

But we are told that he sent another delegation, more honorable than those that had gone before. Is there anything in our lives that accords with that? I take it yes. All the art that you and I have been privileged to gaze upon has been a messenger, saying to us, Render to God the fruit of the vineyard; come out into this larger life of beauty that God has cre-

ated, and acknowledge Him as the glory of the world. All the music that you and I have heard that was noble and true has been another of God's messengers, saying to every one of us, Come into the glory of God's harmony, that your life may no longer be full of discord, but full of the peace of God that passeth understanding. All the great books that have come trooping into your life and mine have come as God's messengers, calling us to a deeper knowledge, to a larger outlook, to a more splendid, worthy life.

Again, we may not dwell upon it, because it would simply expand itself into all the agencies of education, and development, and improvement, that you and I have come under the influence of. The messenger of prosperity that has brought us new wealth, with its opportunities for generosity and mutual helpfulness, — the messengers of books, the messengers of music, the messengers of art, — who does not know them? All God's great works that were before you and me have come trooping into our lives, every one saying, some in a hard and uncompromising voice, Pay the fruit of the vineyard, — some stretching out their hands with a benign look, saying, Render to the Lord the fruit of his vineyard.

O the patience of God! The multitude of interests that God has sent into our lives! Perchance one of them will bring back to God the fruit of his vineyard.

Surely one of the mistakes, as it seems to me, which we make in our efforts to help one another, the mistake the parent makes, the mistake the teacher makes, the mistake the preacher makes, is this, that we suppose the particular thing that has influenced us will inevitably influence our child, pupil, or parishioner. That is a great mistake. God has great troops of messengers, and the one that has come to me may never come to you.

What is the secret, then, by which we shall understand God's dealing with us? What is the meaning of it? Why is it that the messenger that appealed to me, and caused me to fall down in utter abasement of soul and ask God for one more trial before I was called to my final account, — why is it, my friends, that that same messenger does not take hold of your soul and bring it home to God? It is because, I think, that only that messenger can come with his message to you or me who is like you or me. Art will not appeal to this man, because there is nothing artistic in his nature; or, at any rate, it lies there latent, buried so deep that it is impossible for the particular work of art to call it forth. Another man cannot hear the call that comes in strains of music. Another man cannot hear the call that comes in prosperity or new opportunity. Every one of us is different, and therefore it is that God is pouring out the great multitude of his messengers to his people that he loves, in the

hope that some one messenger will find a likeness in each one of his children that will call that child home bearing his sheaves with him.

And is that all? No, the most important comes last. Last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, Surely they will reverence my son. Now of course, the reason that the householder said, Surely they will reverence my son was not simply because of his love of the son, his recognition of the beauty of the son's face, his knowledge of the graciousness of the son's voice, his enjoyment of the glory of the son's presence. All that is true. But we dwell too much upon it. There is another side to it. That "Surely they will reverence my son" was called forth by the knowledge that deep down in every one of those to whom the householder sent was the likeness of the son.

Art does not appeal to you, music does not appeal to you, the great intellectual works of the world do not appeal to you. What, then, is there in common between every one of us gathered here to-day, with all our infinite variety? It is the likeness to the Son of the living God. It is the essential divinity in every poor sinner on this earth to-day. That is the one thing that God makes his final appeal to, probing deeper and deeper into every life, until God's last appeal to the soul stands forth. God says, "Surely that soul will reverence my son."

How does He come to us? How does God send his last appeal to you and me? Soon we shall hear the lifting of the Christmas hymn that tells us the great story of the beginning of God's sending of his Son in human flesh. To-day I would speak, not of the historic manifestation of Christ made flesh, but of that spiritual coming of God's Son to your soul and mine. How has it come?

Whenever there has been presented to us the vision of a nobler and truer life, whenever you have felt that it was possible to live a better life than you have been living, to be a nobler, purer, truer, healthier, more glorious character, there has stood before you God's image of humanity, the revelation of God's ideal fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

Now how variously it comes! Here is a man that has lived a careless life. He has been good enough, as his friends say; he is not a bad sort of fellow. He is honest, reliable, but he is not religious. He is not a Christian. He is not in any conscious relation to Jesus Christ. What is needed if that man is ever to render to God the fruit that God looks for? It must be by answering to God's last appeal to his soul, the revelation of his Son to him. How does it come? O, it comes so differently! Some day the friend that has been with you in all your journey, that has always had a light shining on his face that you have looked at sometimes with a vague curiosity, and

sometimes with a half pity, and sometimes with a profound sense that his life is different from your own,—that friend lies down beside you to die. The end has come. You see that life go out into the darkness, into the mystery, as serene and confident and full of peace as the child lies down at night to sleep. The faith that has been all through this life of which I speak simply manifests itself in its perfection at the end. God has sent his Son in that death, God has sent his Son in that faith, to stand before your face and say to you, Give me the fruit of the vineyard; render to me that which belongs to me; live as my son; you are my child. The perfect Son comes to his own likeness, and asks for the fruit of the vineyard.

It comes in my shame. When I am continuing in sin, suddenly there is the revelation to me of a life that is so different from that that I am now living that it seems impossible that there can be anything in common between the perfect life and my sinful one. And yet in the very knowledge of that difference there is the deeper knowledge of the oneness, and I stretch out my hands and say, Lord, save, or I perish.

It comes in sickness, it comes in despondency, it comes in prosperity, it comes in sorrow, it comes in misfortune, it comes in great trials and perplexities of life. Always God leaves not himself without witnesses. Whenever the door of your life is thrown

open by some great wind of happiness that causes the sunlight to stream into the darkest corners of it, and you lift up yourself in new joy and thankfulness, because the meaning of life has come to you, there stands the Son of God. If the door of your life is put open by that dark and shadowy hand that makes no noise and leaves no sign behind, — the awful figure of death, — there is the presence of the Son of God. Surely they will reverence my Son. Surely God's last appeal must not be in vain.

And yet how often it is in vain. This parable was spoken at the very end of the Master's ministry. It was one of the parables of judgment; but one thing about it which makes it different from the others that we do not sufficiently bear in mind is this: that it is not the householder that sits in judgment on the poor wretch that has failed to render the fruit of the vineyard; it is the man himself that ascends the throne of judgment, and decides whether the credentials of the Son that the Father has sent are worthy of consideration, whether or not he will reject or receive the Son.

That is the great mystery of life, that in the silence of your own soul, my friend, you decide whether this life revealed in the Gospel, of which you have heard from the day you were able to hear anything, — whether it is worth while to receive it or not. You

are the judge, and the Son of the living God stands at the bar of your poor human judgment, and says, Will you receive me or will you reject me?

You may say to me, Do you believe that there is anything so deliberate as that? Do you believe that I actually consider the matter in that way, and decide that I will not be a disciple of Jesus Christ? Because, if you do, you do not understand the mysteries of the human heart. Well, look at it in the other way, and consider what comes to the man that accepts Jesus Christ; who acknowledges that the life that has been revealed to him, however it may have been revealed, is the true life; that there is something like it in him, and that he will devote himself to its service and be a changed man. What happens to that man? Is his judgment deliberate? I suppose that the last act in which a man finally surrenders his selfishness, his self-will, to that divine life, is a deliberate act; but I suppose that, in every case back of it has gone an infinite number of small acts which the man did not know were tending irresistibly to the final statement of his judgment, bringing him to the point where he must say, To whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

It is a long process, but there comes some moment in a man's life when his judgment is a deliberate one. Every little child that has ever done that which his

conscience told him to do when he did not want to do it, has begun to walk the path that will lead to Jesus Christ. Every poor, weak, pitiful boy that at school has been led away by some evil companion and done that which in his heart of hearts he knew was wrong, has begun to reject the Son of the living God.

What happens when actually it comes to pass that you and I declare judgment in this matter? What happens, I say? Look, for the moment that is left us, at the way in which that judgment which has really been the accumulation of innumerable little acts and thoughts and statements finally utters itself as the deliberate statement of a man's opinion about God's dealing with him. What comes to pass? It is always sudden. It is always, in a sense, unexpected. When a man has done the thing, he is always surprised that he did it; but, as I say, it is the result of a long process. What can a man do when actually it comes to pass that this messenger of God will not let him alone? What can he do?

There are but two things he can do. One is to receive Him, and the other is to reject Him. This conflict cannot go on forever, because, my friends, what every one of us wants is happiness, peace and quiet, and joy and serenity and harmony of life. Can you have it with a life standing by your own with its unceasing demand, with its constant rebuke, with its glorious revelation? Is it possible that I, in my sin

and in my evil-doing, can beat peace when that life is there?

Why, my friends, the standing of Jesus Christ by your life and mine before we have been converted, before we have given ourselves up to Him, is like the sudden appearance of the face of the mother in some house of shame where the son riots. It is like the coming home of the patriot, maimed and wounded, and showing himself to the man that, in his selfishness, had refused to bear arms for the glorious cause. It is the solemn face of the father looking on the son that has wasted his substance and is going down to degradation.

How is it possible that there should be peace and harmony, serenity and happiness, when these two things stand there opposed? That is the reason that in every case, sooner or later, a man either receives the Son of God, or says to himself, This is the heir; now I am tired of it; I want to be let alone; I want this conscience that is continually probing and worrying me, — I want that thing to cease. And the man sinks himself deeper in his lusts, in his dishonesty, in his selfishness. For what? That he may silence the voice of the living God.

That is the killing of the Son of God. And every man that deliberately turns away from the vision of a nobler life, and goes back again to that which he

knows in his soul is wrong, that man has done what these men of the vineyard did. He has said, This is the heir; this is the one that is the cause of all the trouble and perplexity of my life; he will not leave me alone; therefore he shall be cast out and killed. And there are men walking this earth to-day, and in this city to-day, that are just as truly guilty of the blood of the Son of God as Judas who sold Jesus, or Pontius Pilate who gave the word that he should be crucified.

St. John tells us in his Gospel that a year before the crucifixion Jesus stood on the hill of the Temple, and, looking into the faces of the people who scorned him, said, Why go ye about to kill me? They were at once astonished and indignant, and answered, Thou hast a devil, who goeth about to kill thee. But Jesus knew that they were killing the Divine Life in their souls, and that soon they would kill the Prince of Life. O, let us look into our lives and see whither they tend!

And now there is but one word more, and that is the other possibility of it all: the possibility, when that life comes to us, to lift up our hearts and say, This is God's last appeal to me; this is God's last message. Not because the infinite mercy of God is exhausted, but because the possibility of my nature

is exhausted. When God has sent his own Son to appeal to that which is in me like him, God has made his last appeal, has probed down to the very root of my being.

O, it is possible in that moment to respond, and, as John says in the first chapter of his Gospel, to receive him. And to as many as received him; to as many as said, Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief; to as many as have said, Lord, I am a sinner, thou hast the power to change my sin and set me pure before God; to as many as have said, Lord, I am bound with the chain of sin, shame has wrapped me round and round, thou canst release me; Lord, my heart is broken and my life has become a burden, but thou, I believe, canst be my comfort and my strength; — to every such man there is given power to become the son of God, to live a new life; to walk this earth, so full of trouble, so full of sickness, so full of quarrelsomeness, so full of meanness and dishonesty, — to walk it a new man, knowing that the Eternal is our Father, that He is with us, and was before us, and is leading us on. Not because He desires us to give fruit that He may enjoy it does He send again and again, and Him "last of all," but because he has created every one of us that we might yield up the glory of our own nature, and find, in so yielding, our own peace, our own joy, and our own glory.

O, I beg of you, as you listen to the beginning of that great story of the earthly life of Jesus Christ, I beg you to believe, every man and woman and child here to-day, that two paths are opening up before every one of you. The one path leads to the crucifixion of the Son of God afresh, and the putting him to an open shame, and the other path leads to the reception of Jesus Christ, and with that reception God's great gift of the power to be called and to be the child of the Living God.

IV.

REVELATION.

And they heard the voice of the Lord God.
GENESIS, iii. 8.

THE Christian year may be compared to a noble symphony. It begins with the far-off murmur of judgment, and ends with the triumphal burst of All Saints' day, when we "see the dead, both small and great, stand before God." But each season has its own note. In Advent we have the three great means used in the Divine education brought to our notice, — the Bible, the Church, and the adversities of life.

We are to think to-day of Revelation, and its record in the Bible.

"And they heard the voice of the Lord God." This is the beginning of the record of Revelation, and like all beginnings it is full of interest, for in it we find the key to all that follows. It is so simple. From the beginning the narrative tells us of God's speaking. Suddenly man hears the Divine voice. A commandment, we are told, had been given the man, but there had been no conversation, no intercourse,

with God. Man knew that he was accountable; that was all; there was a dim sense of right and wrong. The beauty of the morning passed in joy, the heat of the noonday filled his veins, in the pride of his strength he sinned, and in the silence of the evening he heard the voice of the Lord God.

What does it mean? The man who wrote these words long ago was not troubled by questions which we ask now. He had had experiences of life, and had had thoughts come to him that he had never dreamed of before. It was like the lifting of a veil, and he saw his heart. He put himself in the place of that man of whom Hebrew tradition spoke, and said, He sinned. When he sinned he knew that he was naked. He knew at once his helplessness and his shame, and in that new and awful experience he heard the voice of the Lord God. He saw the future of man, — a life of toil and weariness destined to end in death. But it was possible by the hope of triumph sometime, somewhere. The voice spoke, the veil was lifted.

There are two ways of approaching such a story as this. They are sometimes called the sceptical and the believing spirit. I prefer to call them the critical and the sympathetic spirit.

The critical spirit says, "How did the man know

that this was the voice of God?" and the record gives us no answer. The Bible begins with an immense assumption. It is that there is a God, that all things visible are the effects of His energy, that man is essentially one with Him. Granted the assumption, and Revelation follows inevitably. The father must speak to his child. The child must know when his father speaks. To have that assumption for the groundwork of our thinking, and to find illustrations of it in one's life, is to be in sympathy with the record of the many revelations. But to deny that assumption, and then insist that the experiences of men should prove that they are not illusions, is to do what would not be tolerated in the daily affairs of life. It is to arraign the soul for lunacy, and insist that it shall prove itself sane. It is enough to make a man insane to put him in such a position; and this is not a mere figure of speech, it is a fact which many an inmate of our asylums witnesses to, — the victims of religious depression they are sometimes called, and strange conclusions are drawn from their state; but so far as I know no one has pointed out that this condition has been produced not by religion, but by that bastard rationalism which called in question that fundamental conviction of the human mind that it is in communion with the Eternal God.

Of course, if we are entering a plea for religion as if it were an exceptional thing and needed special

protection in order that it might survive, then no contempt would be too great for its advocates. But we make no such plea, we simply submit that it should receive the same treatment that is given to the knowledge derived from the senses. Is that done? I appeal to those of you who look with a half-pitying curiosity at the religious life and lament that it has not the same proof that is to be found elsewhere. I ask where? In the testimony of the senses? Certainly there is nothing that I can be more sure of than the resistance of this plate to the pressure of my hand, or that I see the people who sit before me; but if any child were to ask how I know it, I should have to fall back on that childish answer which is the unconscious testimony of the human mind to faith in its own affirmations, "I know because I do." For consider what is required when we ask for proof of the reality of sensual impressions. We are asking that proof be given of the existence of the external universe. But that cannot be done. It may be that the universe is as unsubstantial as the cloudy figures of rampant horses and flying dragons that children see in the evening sky. It is their imagination alone which gives form to the nebulæ. It may be that we have inherited a fancy of some early generation, and stand like children looking at we know not what, and calling it mountains and rivers and lakes. The great assumption of a visible

universe, coupled with the kindred assumption that our judgment on the senses' testimony is true, underlies all our thought of visible things.

All the truths of mathematics are based on axioms, self-evidencing truths, that is, statements which commend themselves to educated minds. All the monuments of science rest on the faith that this is an intelligible universe, that there is order in it, and that that order can be interpreted by man. What is the result, then, of these considerations? It is this, that what we call Revelation, that is, the communion between man and God, rests upon an assumption which cannot be demonstrated perhaps, but yet does not differ in that respect from other knowledge which we think we possess.

There are two objections which are sometimes made to this line of argument: first, that it seems to prove that, because all things are uncertain, therefore one thing is as improbable as another, which is absurd. To which I answer, that all the argument was intended for was to answer an objection by showing that the same objection would invalidate all conclusions, — not that revelation is true, but simply that it is possible. Another objection is, that while it may be true that scepticism underlies all knowledge, yet the testimony of humanity is unanimous as to the witness of the senses, while it cannot be pretended that this is the case with revelation. This is very

true, but why is it so? It is because the immense majority of the human race has been in the past, and is to-day, chiefly interested in things of the senses, and consequently sensuous things are more easily appreciated by us than things of the spirit. But we are just as sure that the square on the hypothenuse is equal to the sum of the squares on the other two sides of a right-angled triangle as we are of any fact witnessed to by the senses. Yet how small is the number of men of whom that is true. It is questionable if to-day there be a man alive to whom all the propositions of Euclid are axioms, as they were said to be to Newton; but that does not shake our faith in their truth. We cannot explain them to the aborigines of Australia, we cannot translate them into the gibberish of the ape-like man of the African forest, but we none the less believe them to be true. So the objection fails. It is true that the God-consciousness of man is but partially developed, but that is what we might expect, for look at the story of the human race as told by science. There was a time when there was life upon this planet which had no consciousness. There came a time when to that life there came the dim dawning of a new day, and life groped and felt and vaguely saw. The universe was revealed to life, and in that revelation was implied clothing and better food, buildings, and music and art.

There came another day. Life became self-conscious, differentiated itself from the universe, rose like an island in the universal sea, or stood like a giant and beat against the titanic forces of nature. It was the beginning of the revelation of self, and in it was hidden war and industry, and the skill that would sail the seas and span the rivers and "out of the hills dig brass."

There came another day when man's spirit looked within, and he saw something of the mystery of his own spirit. It was the day of the revelation of personality, and was the dawn of law to protect that person, and history to instruct, and poetry to inspire. Homer and Virgil, Dante and Shakespeare, Milton and Browning, then began to be.

And then came a day when in the inmost caverns of his life man heard a voice which he knew was the voice of the Eternal, and in that faint whisper there was the promise of Abraham and Moses, of Zoroaster and Buddha, of the Psalms of David and the vision of Isaiah, of the moan of Jeremiah and the shout of Ezekiel, of the thunders of John, and the whirlwind of Peter, and the earthquake energy of Paul, and the still, small voice that said, "When ye pray say, Our Father." The history of mankind is the history of revelation, the lifting of the veil which hid nature, and man, and God.

The *record* of the revelation of the spiritual life, the slow lifting of the veil from conscience, the opening of the vistas to hope, the visions of faith, are found in many books, written in many tongues; and the writers of wise books, as the Vedas or the Avestas, or the Koran, or the Bible, have always been spoken of as inspired men, — men filled with a spirit different from their time, — a spirit of deeper faith and larger hope and wider charity, a spirit of spiritual insight, the effect, in a word, of the influence upon their souls of the Spirit of God.

If we ask ourselves about the relative merits of these books, we may find many ways in which they may be tested; but perhaps the one which will appeal most to us is the simple one of works. What book had the greatest influence on mankind? What book has nerved soldiers, and inspired statesmen, and inflamed poets, and given subjects to art? What book has entered into life and made the child thoughtful, the youth temperate, and the man patient? What has blessed marriage, and comforted the dying, and given hope to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death? There is but one answer. It is that collection of Hebrew and Christian literature which is called the Bible.

If we ask ourselves what has been the secret of its success, it may not be easy to find the answer. Partly, no doubt, it is due to the immense diversity of the

subject it treats. From the fierce lust of prehistoric man to the sweet love story of Ruth the story runs. We are led from the idol-worshipping slaves at the foot of Horeb to the splendors of Solomon's temple. We listen breathlessly to the latest rumor from Egypt, and tremble at the tramp of the Assyrian host. We delight in Joseph and David, the types of purity and courage. There is nothing like it except in Shakespeare. Whom shall we put beside Hamlet and Macbeth, Henry V. and Hotspur, Shylock and Lear, Wolsey, Katherine, and Portia, and Rosalind? We put beside them Miriam and Deborah, Ruth and Esther, the story of the subtle poison that worked in Balaam's veins, the madness of Saul, the dying bed of David, the weird Elijah, the fearless Micaiah, Jezebel and Ahab, Jeremiah and Daniel, the mighty Elisha, the crafty Gehazi, the princely Naaman, and the dear little home-sick girl that sent him to be cured of his leprosy.

Doubtless this marvellous power in the Hebrew dramatists has had something to do with the power of the book, but there is a deeper reason still. It is that men have found it a light unto their path. Consciously or unconsciously, they felt that this history was not an exception to the story of life, but the interpretation of life. They felt that all life was a revelation, and from these men of old they learned to listen for the voice of the Lord God, and heard it.

But above all there is the revelation in the Gospels of our Saviour's life of joy and patience and power, and in the Epistles the revelation of the revolution in society which that life wrought, and the wonder of the converted lives of which it teaches. This story has slowly brought those who have known its power to feel that this book is the text-book of the child of God, that God speaks because He loves us, that man can hear because he is the child.

Looked at in this way, my friends, as the noblest record the world has of the God-spirit working upon the heart of man, how rich and holy our Bible seems. How petty and insignificant the disputes that break its majestic calm! Were the men who wrote this book inspired? See if they inspire you. Compare the story of Eden in Genesis with the same story in its Chaldean form. In both are the mythical tree of life, the fabled serpent, the living sword; but in Genesis amid the vain shadows of life walks the Lord God, to reprove and comfort and bless. You feel that you have opened a history of a humanity which lives and breathes and has its being in God.

Were these writers *infallible?* Not if they were human. The astronomy and geography, the political economy and jurisprudence, the social customs and sanitary laws, were of their day; but He whom they knew in spite of their limitations is the Eternal.

When we stand rapt in admiration before some masterpiece of the Venetian painters, do we complain because the Wise Men are dressed like Doges, or because Mary is like a princess of the Republic ? Has the Marriage at Cana no message because the lordly dishes are borne by Nubians, and Italian hounds are held in leash ? Because the master of the feast might be Bassanio, because the roof is upheld by mighty pillars, and the great table spread with meat and drink such as was never heard of in Galilee, because he knew less than we do of the customs of the Jews, shall we say Paul Veronese was not a painter ? No, what inspires is not archæology, but insight, and to have seen that the presence and blessing of Jesus will make any marriage the joyous feast which the splendors of Italy but faintly portrayed, is a truer rendering of the story than the dull commentary that tells us how much a firkin contains.

That all these controversies have turned us from the Bible, so that we do not know it as our fathers did, is a fact which serious-minded men much lament; but better days are coming. More and more men in the Church are saying the Bible is not infallible, but in it is the Spirit of God, "and it is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work."

May the teachings of this day lead us to a deeper love for the treasure which we have inherited, written by men with their heart's blood, defended by our fathers to the death. Let us use it intelligently, reverently, thankfully, for it is indeed the Word of God.

V.

THE MINISTRY OF THE CHURCH.

Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, who appeared unto thee in the way which thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mayest receive thy sight. — Acts, ix. 17.

AS the service for the second Sunday in Advent turns our thoughts to the Bible, so the service of to-day turns them to the ministry.

The difference between a minister and a priest is fundamental. The Church of the New Testament knows nothing of priests, but it is the continuous record of a ministry. And this is not accidental. It was as impossible for the Church of Peter and Paul to have a priest, as for the Republic of Jefferson and Jackson to have a king. It was a difference not of names, but of ideas. A priest presupposes sacrifice. The priesthood exists for the purpose of making an atonement; by its service an offended God is made propitious to the sinner. Through his office man can draw man to God. On the other hand, a ministry *presupposes* an atonement. Its service is

the perpetual declaration that God has shown himself propitious. Through him man will believe that God is seeking him. In other words, one seeks to make a desirable condition, the other seeks to open men's eyes that they may *see* the conditions which God has made.

How beautifully this is brought out in the story of Saul's enlightenment, from which our text is taken! Saul, on his way to Damascus, is stricken down, blinded by the sudden flash of light that smites through the clouds of passion which darkened the sky of his life. Ananias hears of his state, and after a moment's hesitation goes to him, and, when he has enlightened him, receives him into the Christian Church. Of Ananias we hear no more. But we have seen enough. He steps for one moment out of the obscurity of his life into the light of history, and when he has passed across the stage we see in his place the man who shall, in his turn, open the eyes of the Church to the meaning of Christ's commission. Ananias was not a priest, — he was not even an office-bearer in the church at Damascus, — he is introduced simply as "a certain disciple." The few words which are recorded of his part in the interview with Saul are surely not all he said at such a momentous time. I think we should rather suppose that, when Paul told the story to Luke, Luke

condensed the teaching of Ananias into what to-day we should call the "heads of the discourse." "Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, who appeared unto thee in the way which thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mayest receive thy sight." Such words as these, leading to such momentous consequences, deserve our serious consideration. They describe the ministry of the Church.

"Brother Saul." This was not an address of mere civility, it was the welcome into that brotherhood which Jesus had made possible through the revelation of the Fatherhood of God. Saul was not yet a brother in the technical sense, he had not yet been baptized. But Ananias recognized him as a child of God and brother of Jesus Christ. Here it seems to me must be the starting point of any effective ministry. The man whose eyes are open must see men as God sees them. When the new scholar is brought into the school-room the wise teacher does not greet it as an idiot, and promise to make it wise. No training can do that. The child is greeted as one more of that great company of sane and intelligent creatures whose joy shall be found in the gradual unfolding of its perceptions and the enlargement of its powers of reflection.

We sometimes talk as if baptism created a relationship between the soul of the unconscious babe

and the Eternal God. Indeed, by some the service of our Church is thought to lend color to this theory. But it is a hasty conclusion, at variance with the evangelical character of our Church. In the Catechism the child is taught that in baptism it is "made" the child of God. But look at the same use of the word in Romans (v. 19): "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." Strange conclusions have been drawn from these words as they stand in our English Bibles, but if we look at the word *καθιστάναι*, we see that it means a judicial declaration. It is an authoritative statement of a fact. A man has committed a crime. The judge announces that fact, and, if you please, "makes" him a criminal; another man is acquitted of a crime, and the judge discharges him, and again you may say he has made the man innocent; but in neither case has his statement any value unless it conforms to the facts. The child is made the child of God because it is his child, and were it not so, nothing that man could do — no, nothing that God could do — could establish that relationship, which has always existed or never can exist. For to say that man is the child of God does not mean that sometimes God is pleased with this or that man, or that some six thousand years ago God created man in his own image. It means far more than that. It is the assertion that

God is not an isolated Being, but that whenever God was there existed in Him that which is essentially human, partially manifested in many men, perfectly manifested in the man Christ Jesus. If this be true, then it follows that, if any member of humanity is a child of God, every member is also. See what such a truth implies. I look about this congregation, I recognize some of you as communicants of this parish. I know that, were the communion to be administered at the close of this service, the large majority of you would withdraw. How many of you are members of the Church? *Every one of you!* You may not know it, or you may be indifferent to it, but the fact remains that every one of you belongs to the Church, and the Church belongs to you. From time to time we hear of some man who abandons some great property and loses himself in the mountains of Africa or amid the islands of the South Sea; but that does not change the fact that he is a great proprietor, and may enter at any time into its possession. So is it with your heritage in God. No act of priest or bishop can make an ape a member of the Church, unless they can make it human. No act of man can cast man from the Church, unless he can destroy his humanity. For what is the Church? It is that ideal humanity on which God looks, — that ideal humanity which lives in perpetual communion with God, — whose meat and drink it is to do God's will. Actually, no

man has fulfilled that ideal except Jesus Christ. Potentially, it is a part of every man. The most debased slave driver that to-day lashes the poor captives in Equatorial Africa is a Christian; for before the sun goes down his eyes may be opened, and he may see the horror of his sin, and the joy of Christ's service. Do you say that this is confusing? I hope not. What we commonly and rightly call the Church is the great company of faithful people, — those who know God as their Father and Jesus as their Saviour. But no company has realized the ideal. It belongs to humanity, and is an inherent part of your human endowment; and no man is a true man until he enters upon that life of communion with God which the Church witnesses to and strives to realize. You may have a priesthood without this conception of humanity, as Israel had. You may have proselytizing, as Islam had, denying the brotherhood of man. But a ministry is dependent upon the truth that every man is God's child, and that you can draw near to him and call him Brother.

We sometimes hear it said that those who take such a view of humanity lose all sense of distinction. If every man is a child of God, how can we call on men to be born anew? If every man is a Christian, who are heathen? If every man is a member of the Church, there is no difference between saints and sinners. I do not wonder that men say such things,

for they think that God begins to work when they become conscious of his working. But the sun must light your eyes before you can see it rise. The fact exists before we see it. Jesus only is the Son of God, for Jesus only has lived as his Son; but the vilest criminal was made by God with a purpose which his crime witnesses he has failed to fulfil. He is a Christian who dwells in Christ and Christ in him. In the most besotted heathen there is a germ of love and faith and hope. There have been moments when he has moved the members of his spiritual being toward a better life, as the unborn child moves in the womb; he is born in the day when he comes forth soul and body into the activity of that higher life, to which he truly belongs. Every child of man is a part of that ideal humanity which is the Church; he is a member from the beginning; he realizes his membership when he says, "Father, I have sinned and am not worthy to be called thy son; let me serve in thy house." How that great truth underlies the whole of the New Testament! Jesus sees Nathanael coming to him, and greets him as a friend. "How do you know me?" cries Nathanael. "Long before Philip called you, I saw you." "You are persecuting me," said the voice of the Lord to Saul. "The pangs and fears and disgust and remorse that have been in your soul since Stephen preached have been the spiritual goads with which I

was turning you into the way of life." "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God. While we were yet sinners Christ died for us," writes St. John. "God so loved the world," says our Lord, "that he sent his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on him might not perish." What did God love in the world? The cruelty and hate, the lust and shame, the envy and strife? No, he loved that image of Himself, so faint in some lives as to be invisible to all save the eye of God, and sent his Son that men believing the Son might come to themselves. No act of the Son could make God love what it was not in his nature to love, but every word and deed, every smile and tear, every drop of sweat, and labor of dying heart, and groan of fainting breath, bore witness to the love of God that passeth understanding.

Now all this is wrapt up in the words of Ananias, — "The Lord, even Jesus, who appeared unto thee in the way which thou camest, hath sent me." How such words must have thrown light on the past! How the present must have seemed to that troubled soul to be the natural outcome of the past!

I should be sorry to have any of you feel that this is an analysis of the experience of Saul, which has only a vague reference to the present. I know what it was to Saul, because I know that this same message is bringing comfort to many souls to-day. What is

the reason, my friend, that you do not realize your calling? Is it not that you are not sure whether you have been called? Why do you shrink from acknowledging yourself a Christian? Is it not that you do not know what the Christian life is to be? O, if there be any such here this morning to whom Jesus seems unreal and the Christian life unnatural, let him ponder on these words. The rebuke of conscience, the voice of sacrifice that called you from selfishness, the vision of a noble life, the joy of doing good, the sudden upward leap of your spirit at the thought that the power which guides the stars and holds the earth and governs your life is Love, the expansion of your powers as you have stood for a moment in the presence of hope and thought of what might be, — have these experiences been unreal? Have you not felt then that you were your true self, that that was the natural thing to be? Have you not felt that the unnatural thing was to live as a stranger to God, to touch your fellow men in every part of life, but never as spiritual beings? Has not your spirit stretched its wings of prayer almost without your volition as you have read or heard or sung,

> "Change and decay in all around I see,
> O Thou who changest not, abide with me"?

Well, if these or any such experiences as these have ever come to you, I tell you, as Ananias told Saul, that "the Lord, even Jesus, who appeared unto thee

in the way which thou camest, hath sent me." It is not a new thing that has come to you. It is the working of that same spirit that has rebuked and exhorted and comforted you in the past that is claiming you to-day. The Christian life is no unnatural thing. It is the blossoming out into perfect beauty of that which you have known from the beginning. There has been no time since you began to be, that the spirit of Christ has not been with you. In fretful infancy and passionate youth, in prideful manhood and weak old age, the spirit of Jesus has been with you; and now the Church, that portion of humanity which is even dimly conscious of its life in God, is sent to you.

"That thou mayest receive thy sight." Really that is all that is needed. One man says, "I see what I ought to do, but I have not the power to do it." Another says, "I have power, but I do not know what I ought to do." The conflict can only be ended by entering deeper into the life of the spirit. It is not a question of doing, but of being. If a man really sees what he is, and who has been with him on the way, he will have the vision of what his life ought to be, and with that vision will come power. That was St. Paul's experience. Years after, when he looked back on the great crisis of his life, he wrote: "I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision." He had power to obey. The man who says, I have power,

but lack sight, is mistaken. Sight is the source of power. I cannot say I have strength to do the work of the new year, — I have strength only for the moment. The new strength will come with the new task. The real cause of spiritual impotence is weak sight. If a man truly sees, he will do. Many of us see but dimly. There are two objects between which our gaze vacillates. I am not sure to which I should devote the energy of life. The one which I see most clearly will reflect its light upon me, and in that light I shall discover that within me which is like it, and power will be generated by the contact between that which is without and that which is within. Sight and power are simultaneous. A man wanders aimlessly along the bank of a stream. Suddenly he sees some object in the water. He gazes curiously, without sense of responsibility or thrill of emotion. He looks, he sees a drowning child, and instantly the thrill of life runs through him and he casts himself in to save the child. The power was generated by the sight. The artist looks on the block of marble and sees nothing but the resisting stone; but as he looks, little by little he sees the figure of beauty hidden beneath. With the sight comes the tingling sense of power till the ringing chisel hews down the prison walls, and lets the spiritual thing stand forth in its enduring beauty. All through life it is the same. If any man could see the souls of God's little ones

drowning in sin and degradation, he would take no thought of his life if only he might save them. If any man could see the image of God's Son hidden in the gross sensualism or hard cynicism of men's lives, he would thrill to set it free. If any man could see himself and God, he would have the power of an endless life.

To produce this result is the object of the ministry. They are sent to call every man Brother, to witness that God has been with him on the path of life, — that the Christian life is not a strange thing, but the fulfilment of that of which every man has had some experience, — in a word, that men may receive their sight.

What is the ministry? Whose duty is this? These are the questions men are perpetually asking. Why do we not turn it the other way, and ask, Whose privilege is this? And instantly the answer comes, it is the privilege of the Church, those conscious of their own enlightenment. It cannot be confined to any technical ministry of the clergy. These have their place and work in the Church, but they neither constitute the Church nor have a monopoly of its privileges. The perpetual minister is the Church, and every disciple partakes of that ministry, and, if he does not exercise it, misses the meaning of his membership. Every member should be like a star,

which receives and transmits light. That was the prophet's vision, "They that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars forever." What life can be compared to it for dignity, for interest, for joy? St. Paul writes to Philemon that he owes him his own self. But for Paul's ministry Philemon would have lived till the earthquake shook Colossæ, and never known what he himself was. Paul owed himself to Ananias. You and I owe ourselves to some minister of light, — to noble father or patient mother, to loving wife, perhaps to dying child. Who owes himself to us? Whose eyes have we opened to the love of God, the beauty of Christ, the joy of the Christian life?

If men do not ask themselves such questions, is it strange that we should hear from time to time that the ministry lacks men? Let the Church realize its ministry, and men will break forth from her ranks and say, I cannot be content till all my life is given to the work which fathers and mothers, teachers and friends, are doing. That time is drawing near. The Apostolic ministry is asserting itself in the Church. The Society of Christian Endeavor, the Epworth League, the St. Andrew's Brotherhood, show that the Church is awaking again to its privileges and its opportunities.

When the tide has reached its flood, there will be joy in heaven and earth. There will be Light, and in that light will be known the wisdom of God, the love of Jesus, and the power of the Spirit. May God give us grace to labor for the advent of that day!

VI.

A CHRISTMAS SERMON.

And he took a little child, and set him in the midst of them. — St. Mark, ix. 36.

IF we were asked to choose the one act of Jesus's life which was the most significant expression of his teaching, I think we should choose that touching scene, when, coming into the house at Capernaum, he turned to his disciples and said, "What were ye reasoning in the way? But they held their peace, for they had disputed one with another in the way, who was the greatest. . . . And he took a little child, and set him in the midst of them; and taking him in his arms, he said unto them, Whosoever shall receive one of such little children in my name receiveth me; and whosoever receiveth me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me." This, it seems to me, is the act most significant of the meaning of Christ's coming; for what he was saying to those men of evil passions was, If you wish to be great, you must be humble; if you wish to be divine, you must be human. The true human spirit is the child spirit.

It will lead you to me, and my spirit is my father's. The unity of God and man has not been broken. I am the Mediator, revealing to you the path by which you may pass from the innocence of childhood to the heroism of manhood, and from the victory over the world to the glory of the Father.

Compare this act with the words in which our Lord tells us the secret of his working: "The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father doing; for what things soever he doeth, these the Son also doeth in like manner." When the Son acted his great parable at Capernaum, he only did what the Father had done on the first Christmas day, when in the midst of the warring world he too "set a little child."

"When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of Herod the king, there came wise men from the East." There were no wise men in the West at that time who would not have said that God's last appeal to his children was foolishness. That the righteous must bring the lawless to a better life, the Roman Empire believed as well as we. Some men believed it on the ground of self-preservation, but others believed it because they recognized that they had a duty which they owed the world. And it is that sense of duty which dignifies the busts of the Emperors, and hides their lust, and tempers their cruelty;

but they never dreamed that this duty could be done except by the exercise of force. But God revealed on Christmas day that the world was to be ruled by the King of saints, — that meekness, not force, was to be the instrument. Cæsar thrashed men with his iron flail till they fell helpless at his feet. But this little child was the Prince of Peace, who was to conquer by disarming men. This is the key to the Christmas story. The patient beasts bow their heads at the feet of the babe who should suffer far more than they had done; the wise men bring their gifts to the little child who is the secret of the universe. The shepherds hear the angels' song because the child of the peasant woman is the Son of God who shall open the kingdom of heaven to all believers. At the manger of Bethlehem are met the creation groaning and travailing in pain, the wise men weary with the search for truth, the shepherds, poor, forgotten, unknown, and despised, and on them smiles the little child, lying in the foreground of human life, while the background is filled with the mystery of the power and wisdom and love of God. And these are to be reconciled. The human is not to be destroyed, but redeemed; sinners are not to be crushed, but converted; the enemies of God are not to be trampled under foot, but disarmed. Can it be done? If we stand again by the manger, it may be we shall hear the voice that spake to the prophet:

"Not by might nor by power, but by my spirit, the spirit of the little child, saith the Lord of hosts."

What is the spirit of the little child? First of all, it is the spirit of trust. It begins to manifest itself in that willingness to come to us and be caressed, which is not only one of the most attractive traits of childhood, but also the doorway by which we may enter into the child's life and impart to it such wisdom as we have learned. The child trusts us, and we fondle it, and so reveal to it our love. If that spirit is encouraged, the child will tell his joys and sorrows, and so make of his parent his best friend. And at last the child will open its mind to the father's teaching, and through its trust in his wisdom receive what the father has to impart. That, we would all say, is the natural relation between a father and his child,— openness of mind on the one hand, and inexhaustible love on the other. Suspicion, distrust, indifference, these are unnatural, they come with sin. The natural childlike spirit is trustful. That is the spirit which God revealed on Christmas day. The babe of Mary knew no more of God than any little child that was born this morning. But it loved Mary, and it believed in Joseph, and it smiled on Simeon and Anna, and rejoiced the hearts of the shepherds. Not because it was different from other children, but because it was like them, a dear little baby who trusted those that loved him.

"Ah!" we say of our children, "if that could only continue, if we could keep them little!" Mary and Joseph felt the same. "Son," said the mother to the growing boy, "why hast thou thus dealt with us?" The boy's answer was wonderful: "I am about my father's business." The spirit of trust had not departed from Jesus, only it had a new object. It never failed. It was filled with awful doubt. It was lifted high by great prosperity. It was shaken by sorrow. It was racked by suffering, — it was faced with shame and death. It never failed. "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit," was the outpouring of the same trust that had slept on Mary's breast.

I must pass over many things in the child spirit — friendliness and wonder, the angel of hope that spreads its wings to keep beside the dancing feet — that I may speak of joy. There comes a time in the lives of most of us when joy seems to be the exception. We expect worry and disappointment, pain and loss. But it is not so with the child. Those things are to it unnatural, and it puts them from it. We go into some house where death has come; the elders weep, but the children laugh or make a poor little effort to keep quiet, for death has no meaning to them. The nurse tells them that the father's laugh will never echo through the house again, that the mother will never stand beside the bed; but the child does not believe

it. "Mortality is swallowed up of life." We, we who call ourselves Christians, pity the children's ignorance, and say it is because they cannot understand that they do not feel their loss, that their ignorance saves them. No, my friends. Their ignorance protects them doubtless, as the darkness protects the flowers; but it does not beget that faith in the power of life. The child's spirit is the perpetual witness that life is the reality and death the accident, that joy is the atmosphere in which the soul should live, not sorrow. This was the life of the Man of sorrows. No joy of self-indulgence can be compared with what Jesus knew through doing the will of God. No thrill of prosperity was like the glory on the mount when Jesus heard the Eternal say, "Thou art my beloved Son." No satisfaction of success was like the joy the Saviour knew when he saw the travail of his soul, and was satisfied with it, in the day he died to save the world. The joy of the little child whose spirit leaped up at the splashing of the water in Nazareth's fountain, whose soul drank deep of the glories of the world when Hermon's top shone in the Syrian sun, did not fail, but found new sources of blessedness in the tears of the repentant woman and the cry of the lost soul to whom he showed the Father's house. The object of our faith and hope and joy must change, but the true human spirit can mount as on Jacob's ladder even to the throne of God.

The spirit of trust and the spirit of joy, — that is our heritage. There is not a querulous and soured woman of our acquaintance, not a suspicious and disappointed man sitting moody in his selfish house to-day, who did not begin life with that divine gift to the human soul, the spirit of the little child. We all began as heirs of the kingdom of heaven. Which of us has not at some time wasted his substance? To-day is the feast of the prodigal son. In Jesus humanity came to itself. In Him we know ourselves as sons of God. That is the gospel of Christmas, but the Christmas exhortation is to place the little child in the midst.

How is that to be done? Look away from our homes for a moment, where all is bright and where plenty reigns, and think of the cold and hunger and nakedness, — think of the army of men and the crowd of women who fill our jails. Listen to the deep murmur of discontent. Consider what it means that this service in which we are engaged men mock at, and say that the church is for the rich, or at least for the well to do, — that our money is protected by the law, but gotten unjustly, — that we say we love God whom we have not seen, while we hate our brother whom we have seen. I know how unjust much of this is. I know that many — all of you — would suffer no man to want if you could help him. I know

how much is done at this Christmastide to relieve poverty and comfort the sick that the world knows nothing of. But I know also, my friends, that the disease is deeper than many of us suppose, and that it cannot be cured by almsgiving. The misery of it is, that no one can tell us how to prevent the evils of the day. The poor may not be growing poorer, — I do not believe they are, — but they are growing more helpless. I have no scheme to offer, but I would bear witness on Christ's birthday against the false doctrine of the day, which says the way to help the world is to get possession of the world, and then you can do good with it. It is our great temptation. Resist it. When you enter again to-morrow into your industrial life, place a little child in the midst. Let the spirit of trust in your Father show itself in your work. Say to yourselves, when you are tempted to grasp all that your hands can hold, "The Lord will provide." Let those with whom you do the work of life see that you are free from fear and anxiety, and the panic will subside. You did not rush this morning to seize your gifts. Do not rush to-morrow to seize the world's wealth, but take your blessings as God's gift, and then you will use them for His glory.

Place a little child in the midst of your social life. Cultivate the spirit of friendliness, and cast out the spirit of suspicion. A child may grow suspicious, but it is unnatural. Almost any child you pass on the

street will answer your greeting with a smile, and, if you care to ask, will tell you what was in its stocking. Well, let more of that spirit come into our lives. Try to believe that the slights of life are accidental, that men mean well. Be ready to forgive. It is not always easy, but if you remember whose child you are and whose child he is who has wounded you, it can be done. O what a merry winter this might be, if all our parties were children's parties! if we went here and there to rejoice and make joyful, to forget our tasks and punishments and bruises, and make the most of human friendship in the household of God!

But, above all, set the little child in the midst of your own hearts. I look in your faces, and I know that our Father desires the peace and joy of each one of you as you desire them for your children. One man fails to grasp them because he is held back by some evil habit, and then cannot reach them because he is sick with sin; but there are many more who are filled with the spirit of discontent. They moan, "The circumstances of my life shut me in, and hinder me from doing what I wish to do." No doubt, my friends. But there are no circumstances which keep you from being what God wishes you to be. You dream of some great work that you would like to do for God and man, — you are thwarted in your plan. Well, now see if you cannot be something

better than you have been. "He that ruleth his own spirit is greater than he that taketh a city." The man who submits to the trials and disappointments of life patiently and cheerfully is doing more for God and man than he who builds a monument of his energy.

It may seem a strange thing to say to a Christian congregation, but I can think of no better thing to say to you on Christmas day than this. Let us try for to-day to be Christians. The Christian spirit is the child spirit that looks to God as its Father, and is strengthened; thinks of itself as his child, and is comforted; looks on each man as His child and its brother, and loves. And he that receives that spirit receives Christ, and he that receives him receives not him, but Him that sent him, God. So that the divine life that is in us may be born; so that the incarnation of God may be accomplished in our lives this day. God give you, my dear people, that great Christmas gift which exceeds all that we can desire.

VII.

THE MIRAGE A REALITY.

The parched ground shall become a pool.
ISAIAH, XXXV. 7.

HOW much of the Bible is unintelligible to us because we have no familiarity with the scenery amid which it was written! How much more these words must have meant to the men who first heard them than they can mean to us who have never seen a desert! For the picture that the prophet had in mind was of a caravan travelling across the desert, and his hearers had many of them, doubtless, formed a part of such a company, and knew what it meant to plod on over the fiery sand, hour after hour, to hear the wail of the children for water, to see the wife's strength begin to fail, to hear the deep cursings of the men that had not bargained to suffer, and to feel their own strength unequal to the task before them. And then, suddenly, to see afar off the shimmering of the water, and by anticipation to slake the thirst, to see the children revive and hear them laugh, to note the color return to the face of those they loved,

to hear no more cursing, but thanksgiving, from the men, to see the wearied beasts lift up their drooping heads, and all take courage for the next stage of the pilgrimage, and then — to find it was a mirage, an illusion; that the very heat which caused the tongue to cleave to the roof of the mouth had heated the burning sand and parched the ground, so that its rays meeting with the direct rays of the sun caused the light to lie like a shadow over the burning sand, and make them believe that their salvation was near.

I say that to you and me it is hard to understand the full meaning of this prophecy, and in our version it had almost been hidden away; for the real translation of these words, my friends, is not "The parched ground shall become a pool," but "The mirage shall become a pool."

The thing that you have thought that you should see, the thing that you believed would be the satisfaction of your life, the sight of which had brought new vigor to your limbs and strengthened your mind for the onward journey of the pilgrimage, that, says the prophet, shall become true. The mirage, the illusion of your life, shall become a reality. So should we translate the words, "The parched ground shall become a pool."

What has been the mirage that humanity has seen in its journey? No one sermon could begin to give the

answer to that question. But the prophet enters into certain details that we might glance at this morning, I trust for our profit.

The first thing that such men would want would be the slaking of their thirst, the satisfaction of some desire. So he tells them, The mirage shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water. The thing you desire you shall have.

Now, might we not write all history on that text? Might we not go back to the beginning of the history of man, and see that it has been a series of efforts succeeded by failure to gain satisfaction? Is not that the history of every human being? We have all of us, my friends, as humanity at large, we have all of us been struggling from the beginning to be satisfied. And the soul has said to itself, If I can once lay hold upon that particular thing, then I shall be satisfied. It may be wealth, it may be honor, it may be physical strength, it may be popularity, — what you will. The soul has set before it some definite aim, and said, If I can reach that point, then my thirst will be slaked and my soul will be satisfied.

And we have reached it, but we were not satisfied. We found that the same want began all over again; year after year, decade after decade, generation after generation, men have seen a mirage, and said to themselves, If I could reach that, my soul would be satisfied.

Many a man, grown old and weary with repeated failure, has said to his soul, in the secret communion of his own heart, "What is it that thou dost desire, O my soul?" With that sort of double personality of which every man is conscious, a man says to himself, "I have labored for you, I have given up time and thought and energy and strength to the heaping up of riches; I have done this thing by means that, in the secret of my own heart, I do hate and abhor, but I did it in order that you, my soul, which kept urging me on, might at last be satisfied. And you are not satisfied. I have made a home. I have gathered about me those I love. I have increased knowledge. I have widened the circle of my friendships. But I am not satisfied. Still there is something that does not slake the thirst of my soul."

And while these men so long ago thought as we do now, one man stood up in the midst of them all, and shouted aloud, as if it were a great discovery, "My soul is athirst for God." That is the trouble with humanity. It is athirst for God, and it has supposed that it could satisfy its longings with the things that are touched and seen. And the prophet, knowing the long struggle and the repeated failure, looked in the faces of these men, and said, "The mirage shall become a pool," your satisfaction shall be met.

But such a prophecy as that called men's minds away from themselves to the thought of others. In-

dividual salvation, if it could be brought to any one of us here to-day, would not be enough. The woman who knows that she stands in the light of the love of God, but that her husband is in the outer darkness, the man who knows that he has led an upright and true life, but that his son is turning away to wickedness, cannot be satisfied. We are bound one to another. Those that have built the tombs of the prophets got no benefit from those tombs themselves. They only witnessed that they were part of the great past. And all that have engaged in the work of building the monuments which would perpetuate the fame of the present, or erected works which would be for the benefit of those that come after, have been declaring that no man could find the satisfaction of his soul in the completion of his own individual life, but that, knowing himself to be a part of the great whole, he must have that before him all the time which would remind him of his glorious past and his still more glorious future.

Men wandering as individuals have felt themselves lost in a desert, and have said, "O that there were some way in which my feet could stand that I might see the foot-prints of those that have gone before me, that I might know that I am on the track across this waste that others have followed before me, and feel myself a part of the company of those who knew whence they came and whither they are going!"

That has been the wish and hope of multitudes of men who never knew the answer to the desire of their souls.

Hear the word of the prophet: "And a highway shall be there, and a way, and the wayfaring man, though a fool, shall not err therein." There shall come, says the prophet, a day when in the desert a highway shall be built, and men shall know that they are not wandering in this trackless waste, with no knowledge of the home from which they have come, and no understanding of the end and object of the pilgrimage. But their feet shall stand on the way that others have travelled before them, and they shall hear the voice of the past saying to them, This is the way, walk ye in it. And walking in that path, united with the great company of pilgrims who have been through the same experiences, known the same sorrows, been beckoned on by the same mirage, they shall have strength and hope and comfort in the consciousness of this great companionship of the redeemed who walk on the highway of their God.

Again, we look back over the long history of the race, and we find that something else is needed.

If we could see to-day the camp in which the earliest forms of civilization were gathered, before cities were built, or roads were laid, or empires dreamed of, we should find that the camp encircled itself at night

with fire, while without were the beasts roaring for their prey, causing the little children to nestle close to the father who could protect them, causing the women to shudder, and even strong men to ask themselves, May the fiery barrier be broken down, and the beasts that are outside the camp invade us and destroy what we love?

O, how these men and women and children must have looked at one another, and said, Will it ever come to pass that there shall be a wall built that will keep out the beasts? Will it ever be that men will dwell under anything stronger than the black tent, the skin of the beast that we have stretched on poles?

O the illusion, the mirage, as it must have seemed to them, of stately cities and strong walls, and beasts forever banished from the land! But the prophet said, "No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast; they shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there." The day will come when the people shall know that they are protected, when fear shall be taken away from them.

The fear of what? Of beasts? Not that alone, for when the beasts were banished from the land, there was man to be afraid of. And the children said, Who will protect us from the enemy? And the father said, I will. And then the father came to die. And he rolled despairing eyes and cried, Ay, but who will

protect me now? I must go into the unseen land, and face the shadows that I now behold. Who will protect me now? And the priests in every land stood by those men, and said, I will protect you. And the priest said to himself, Who will protect me, — not from the beast, not from men, not from the spirits that may haunt me, not from hell, but from *sin?* Who will keep me from the corruption of sin, — worse than any evil that the world has ever seen or dreamed of? Will the day ever come when asking who will save me from sin and make me what I desire to be, there will stand by me one who will say, I will? The prophet said, The mirage shall become a pool. That which seems impossible shall surely come to pass.

Once more. On the journey much was lost, much was suffered, much endured. And the pilgrim who stepped out so blithely at the beginning of the march was found at the end to be an old man, his head whitened, and all over his face and body written the history of the long conflict, the hope deferred that maketh the heart sick, the disappointment and weariness and sorrow, the hatred of those whom he had tried to help along the journey, the fear in his own heart that it was all an illusion.

So at the last there was something more needed for these weary men. Was all that had been dropped on the journey to be gathered up again? Was all that

had been suffered to have its reward? The prophet said, The mirage shall become a pool. What you have dreamed of joy and peace and glory shall be your portion. For "the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads." All that you have dreamed of, says the prophet, of joy and peace and happiness and glory, the company of those you have loved and lost, the earnest desire for purity, the longing for companionship, the satisfaction of the soul, — all these things, says the prophet, shall be yours. The mirage, the illusion, shall become a reality.

These words were spoken thousands of years ago. What I would like to ask you is, How shall we read them to-day? Have they become true? Is it true that the thirsty soul has been satisfied? Is it true that there is a highway in the desert, and that the wayfaring man need not err therein? Is it true that no lion is there, nor any ravenous beast, but that in the consciousness of safety men are making their journey? Is it true that the redeemed do return and come to Zion with everlasting joy upon their heads, and that sorrow and sighing flee away?

My friends, if you and I, with the experience that we have had of life, and the knowledge of what life is to-day, with all that there is to its disadvantage, with all the disappointments, with all that makes up

the weariness and the burden of life, — if you and I could have stood in the presence of the people that heard the prophet speak, and have told them, out of the experience of our inmost hearts, what we feel and know, there would have gone up one shout from that assembled host, and they would have said, "The Messiah has come. The things of which the prophets spoke have come to pass, if the things that you say are true."

Are these things true? Why, look into your own experiences, and think for a moment, not of your sorrows nor trials nor temptations, not of the weariness and disappointment of life, but of its glory, and see if what the prophet said be not true. See if it is not true that things that in that day seemed an illusion are to-day the realities of life. See if what Jesus said be not true: "I tell you that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them."

What have we seen, and what have we heard? Why, my friends, multitudes of men and women, some of them in this church this morning, know what it is to have the satisfaction of the soul, God with us; the knowledge that our sins have been pardoned, that they shall never rise up in judgment to meet us; the assurance of God's undying love; the knowledge of the sympathy of Him who was cru-

cified for us; the consciousness that God is about us and by us and in us, — is the pool at which our thirsty souls do drink. Is it not so? Has it not been found so by many a soul to whom I speak to-day?

And the way. Have we not that way? There are men and women who are lost, men and women who are wandering through this world, not knowing where they came from nor whither they are going. But is it true of those who have been drawn to the company of Jesus Christ? Are their feet not upon the way that leads to eternal life? Can we not look back over this way of the Church of the living God, and know ourselves one with the company of those that first preached God, of those that suffered persecution, of those that redeemed Western Europe, of those that stood in the fires of the Reformation, of those that have preached in this land, and of those that are to-day the descendants of the blessed company of faithful people? Are we not one of them? Is not that the patent of nobility that every Christian carries within his own life?

Who would give it up? Those who do not know it think that it is a mirage. Those who know nothing of it wonder why Christian people gather about the table of the Lord, kneeling side by side, declaring themselves the disciples of Jesus Christ, and gather week after week to hear his word and to sing his praise. They wonder why it is done. But those

of you who have entered into the company of the disciples of the Master know why it is done. You know that your feet are on the highway, and though you may be a fool in many things, yet you shall not err from the way of salvation. It is the way that comes from God and leads to God, the way of Jesus Christ the Saviour.

And protection. It is hard for us to picture to ourselves what it must have been for the camp to hear the roar of the beasts. It is equally hard for us to picture to ourselves what it must have been for the Church of the early days and of mediæval times to gather with the belief that all the forest was full of demons and evil spirits. It is hard for us to understand the meaning of the prayer that carries us back and unites us with those that have gone before: "Save us, O Lord, from sudden death. Grant, Lord, that in our last hour we may not, for any pains of death, fall from thee." It goes back to the time when men were taken out suddenly from their homes, and, in the awful agony of death by burning, sometimes fell from Jesus Christ.

I am glad the words remain, that they may help us to lift up our hearts to God and thank him for the protection of his people. We are not afraid of death, for Jesus died. We are not afraid of hell, for he descended into hell. We are not afraid of God nor of God's judgment, for it is the judgment of a father.

We are not afraid of anything but sin, and says the Apostle, "Sin shall not have dominion over you. You are not under the law; you are under grace." Christ is personally helping every one of us. What can separate us from the love of God? Can death? Can sickness? Can sorrow? Nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Jesus Christ.

Then what follows? Why, death and life and all things are yours. You are the kings, and these things that you have feared are your servants, and every one of them can be used. Physical sickness, mental weariness, the sorrowful heart, the failing limb, the dying breath, ay, the experiences that shall come when this life is over, are the servants that belong to the kings that God has redeemed through Christ. Nothing shall separate us from his love. We have no cause for fear. "No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast, but the redeemed shall walk there."

And if I have not wearied you, may I say one word more?

The promise and prophecy of joy, — have we not known it? It is not true that sorrow and sighing have left the world, but has not the sorrow and has not the sighing fled away from you, as you have entered into the communion of your God? Have you not come to Zion with everlasting joy upon your head, as you have remembered, not the special things

for which you ought to be thankful, but as it has been borne in upon you that you belong to God and God to you, and that the glory and beauty of life is not in doing God's will as a hard law, but in doing God's will because you have come to love God's will? I do not say we live that way. I say that every Christian man and woman has at some moment in his life, perhaps in the hour of his deepest bereavement, come to Zion with everlasting joy upon his head.

My friends, the prophecy is not to come true; the prophecy has come true. What the prophet said was that these things should come, — the satisfaction of human want, the consciousness that the feet were on the everlasting way, the protection from all evil, and the everlasting joy of Zion in the days of the Messiah.

And now if you ask me whether this prophecy rests upon any principle, and whether its fulfilment has got anything back of it but the individual hope that it may be true, I answer you, Yes, it has. It has the revelation of God in the incarnation of Jesus Christ that man and God are one. And because man and God are one, therefore the mirage that humanity has beheld is the reflection of the refracted rays of the will of God passing through the medium of human life. And every man who has purified himself is, in his own day and according to his capacity,

some sort of revelation, not of his own will, but of God's will revealed through him.

Suppose every one of us here this morning were to write upon the walls of this church the inmost wish of his heart. How many of us would be willing that they should stand there and all turn and read what we desire? Many, many a thing we would blot out rather than any one should know it. Therefore it is not yours. But the inmost desire of your soul, the thing that really deep down in your own heart you want, — that, my friends, shall be yours. "The mirage shall become a pool." The satisfaction of your soul you shall know, because you are God's and God is yours.

Is not that what St. John meant, when he wrote, in that wonderful fifth chapter of his first Epistle, "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: and if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him"? Because your will, your prayer, purified from selfishness, is no longer your will or your prayer. "The spirit helpeth our infirmities," and "maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." It is the divine life in us, passing through us, that causes the mirage to appear in our pilgrimage. Man's will projecting itself on the future shimmers above the burning sand, but it could

not be were it not that it had mingled with the rays of the light of the will of God.

The prophecy has come true, and yet it is as nothing compared with that which shall be in the day when we know him more than we know him now.

What should be our attitude? One of unbounded thankfulness that he has seen fit to reveal himself to us as our Father, and ourselves as his sons. One of unflinching courage, one of undying hope; for every glorious vision that humanity has had upon its pilgrimage of personal joy, of larger truth, of nobler civilization, of human glory, shall, in God's good time, be fulfilled, because it is not the will of man, it is the will of God.

VIII.

SEEING THE INVISIBLE.

Seeing him who is invisible. — Hebrews, xi. 27.

THESE words remind us of many of the sayings of Jesus. They are paradoxical. They are apparently contradictory. How is it possible to see that which is invisible, — to see that which cannot be seen? Let us ask ourselves, then, first of all, What is sight?

We speak of it as if it were a very simple thing. There is no one thing of which we are more sure than that we see an object which is before our face. And yet, when we come to look into it, we find that it is a very complicated process. In the first place, it is mechanical. You and I see simply because light has caused a reflection to be cast from some given object upon the retina of the eye; and there it is, photographed, as we say. It is a purely mechanical process. It is the work of light.

Now think how many objects there are imprinted at a given moment on the background of the eye by this mechanical process of sight. But together with

it goes a spiritual act, the fixing of the attention. For out of this great multitude of objects crowded upon the minute canvas of which we speak, the mind fixes its attention upon one, and declares that it sees it.

You stand side by side with your friend under the sky at night, and he says, See that wonderful star. And you look; you turn this way and that way, and and at last you say, Ah! I see. What does that mean? Does it mean that in the moment when you declare that you behold, — that then the image is imprinted upon the eye? Not so. The image was there; all that the light reflected was painted upon the background of the eye; and you saw the very moment that you fixed your attention upon that one particular object which your friend desired you to see.

Think, then, what a wonderful process it is that is going on all the time, this manifestation of objects by the power of light. The baby opens its eyes, and what is imprinted there? The light touches Mount Washington, and it stoops to enter under the baby's brow. The myriad waves that dance at sea reduce themselves to tiny specks, and are painted on this little canvas. The child does not see them, yet they are all there. The great picture of human life, animals and trees, far-stretching fields, men and women walking, little children playing, clouds sailing over

head, the bending of the trees as they whisper to one another, — all these things are on the background of the baby's eye. What does the little one see? It does not see, properly speaking, anything until the day when it has the power to fix its attention upon one particular object, and, singling it out from all the rest, deliver itself up to the contemplation of its meaning.

See, then, what this thing means. We speak of seeing objects. You say, I see you speaking to me now. I say, I see you listening. I think that I see the church in which we are. I think that I saw the trees under which we walked this morning on our way to church. I think that I shall see the stars to-night. I think that I shall behold men walking in these streets. Yet none of these things is true. We see nothing. We see in every case an image of an object that we declare we see.

Properly speaking, everything is in itself invisible. It has no power of making itself seen. We have no power of seeing it. We think that sight is the one sense that goes out from the human body and deals with objects apart from self. But it is not so. It is in the truest sense the most internal of the senses. It brings all these various things to itself, and, looking on their image, expresses an opinion about their size and form. Note that, I beg. Properly speaking, I say, all things are invisible; and all that you

and I have ever seen was the image of an object that had been revealed to us by the interpreter, light. Thus we stand: there is an object, an image of which light reveals within us. When we think of the image, we say we see the object, and so, in a sense, we do. But, strictly speaking, the object is invisible.

How, then, can we know the reality of any one of these objects that we declare we see? There is nothing that we are more certain of than the existence of objects which we declare we see. Yet upon what does this certainty rest? Seeing nothing, seeing only an image that is reflected upon the background of the eye, contemplating that image, we come to a conclusion about its form, or color, or size. Yet how can we be sure that any one of these objects answers really to the image of it that we are contemplating? We cannot be sure. It is in such a moment as this that we feel the profound truth of the saying of Paul, "We walk not by sight, but by faith." We believe, by a conviction so strong that nothing can shake it, that there is a reality answering to these images which we contemplate. But beyond that no man can go. We simply believe, and, believing, we declare we know.

So, then, the paradox of the text is the statement of a very simple experience and of a very profound truth. We have the power of seeing the invisible.

And now consider the influence of the vision of the invisible. Here is a man vexed and wearied with the tiring routine of life, worn and fretted by petty cares, frightened and oppressed by a great anxiety, weary, despondent, hopeless; and he wanders out into the fields. He sees the flowers growing on every side. He hears the birds sing from the thicket. He notes the power and glory of the oak. He stands under the shadow of the mountain. He looks across the great expanse of the sea. And this sight of the image of invisible nature brings to his soul a sense of peace, and power, and comfort.

What an experience that has been! How it has grown and expanded! How it has been illuminated by the poets! How it has been preached by the painters! How it has been told from lip to lip through all the ages, since the Greeks stood by the laughing sea, and the Jews looked up to the mountains about Jerusalem and remembered the encircling power of God, — since the Swiss peasants felt stronger and freer on their mountain side, and the men of the West felt their souls expanding under the influence of the wide stretch of their prairies!

So it has been through all the history of mankind. The seeing of invisible nature has brought comfort, and a sense of power, and a sense of dignity, and a larger hope, that have been the glory and the comfort of mankind.

And it has not been only in the presence of the scene which specially attracted them, that these men have felt its power. It has come to men who found themselves far from the sea, as a memory of what it was in their boyhood. It has come to men who grew up under the mountain shadow, and now live on some desolate plain. It has come to those who have been banished into some far-off land, — the memory of the sweet meadow, and the darkling wood, and the rippling stream, and the solemn sea, and the vast expanse of plain. These things have all been seen by men who have not been near them for many years, and the sight of that invisible nature has been to them comfort, and power, and peace.

Or look at it again in the sight of the invisible among men. The child goes out to play, and is tempted to do some deed that it knows is wrong; and in that very moment there comes, as plainly as if she stood before it, the image of the mother. The child sees the sweet, strong, tender face, full of sorrow, full of pity, at the sight of the evil that the child is about to do. Or it sees the father, strong, stern, forbidding, and yet full of love and tenderness. And the child says, I cannot do this thing. I have seen the father; I have seen the mother; and in that sight the wickedness that I had in mind has been revealed to me. I cannot do this thing.

That sight of the invisible never ceases to have an

influence upon life. The youth sees it when he comes to some great city, and enters into its glare, and feels the power of its temptations. Suddenly some day there comes before his mind a sight of the sweet, pure village girl, to whom he has spoken of his love before he started off to win his fortune; and in the glare and shame of the city's life he sees her standing, and his heart turns back, and he says, I cannot do this thing. The influence of the unseen! It has the power to bring a man out of shame and corruption, repentant and humble, back to purity and peace.

The man goes forth to his labor, and engages in the great struggle of existence for fortune and place, and some day he is hard beset. A temptation comes to him to do a little wrong to gain a great right. It is so easy. It never would be known. No human being will ever find that he has done an unworthy thing, and if he does it, then there is fortune for himself, and luxury for his wife, and advantages for his children. And suddenly he sees them, sees the wife and sees the children, remembers what they are,— remembers how his wife believes in him, how his children trust him, — and knows that in the day he does that evil deed he can never be the same again, never can respond to the love of his wife, never can answer to the trust of his children, as he has done in the old days. And he says, I cannot do this thing. The

sight of the invisible has saved him from shame and sin, and an abiding remorse.

We need not multiply illustrations of this truth. It must be familiar to us all, — the power of the invisible. The remembrance of nature whose image we have seen; of the mother and father whom we have looked upon; of the wife and children whom we have known; — these visions of memory have a power that every thoughtful man must recognize.

And now let us go one step farther. The Bible is the history of men who had visions of the invisible God. If I have made myself clear in what has gone before, you will see at once, my friends, that the vision of God, like the vision of nature, must be, not the sight of some external thing, but the insight of something that is altogether internal. You see God as you see the mountains and the waves, not outside of yourself, but within yourself. And it is because of this that the revelation of God depicted in the Scriptures is the revelation of a continual process, an endless progress, where men saw God more and more as he was in his eternal glory, but saw him partially only, inasmuch as they were able but partially to receive the reflection of the Divine image upon the background of their souls.

It was not different gods that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Moses, and the judges, and the kings and

the prophets saw. It was the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. And yet Abraham saw not the God of Solomon; he saw the mighty and righteous Judge. And Isaac had a vision of one who offers himself in sacrifice. And Jacob saw One who was a Wrestler, wounding that he might heal. Moses saw him who is invisible, and, behold, he was the same that had been beheld by the patriarchs, and yet he was different. It was like the sight which we get of the sunset behind a great range of hills. We see the sun set, and all the western sky flames with glory. And then we go a little farther on our way, and we see that night is apparently come. And then we march still farther to the north, and, behold, the sun is now just setting again in this valley that has opened between the mountain peaks. It is not a new sun that we have seen; it is not a new sunset that we have seen; it is the same. And yet the revelation of its glory and its beauty is different in every case.

So was it with these men. The Eternal One that Moses saw was greater and nobler and more splendid than the Judge of Abraham, or the Sacrifice of Isaac, or the Wrestler of Jacob. So we might follow it all through the Old Testament history, and see that this seeing of the invisible has been, to each age and to each individual, a new and more splendid revelation of the Eternal God. But this sight of the invisible was confined to certain individuals; and at

last the belief took possession of men that it was within the power, not of every man, but only of a chosen few, to see the Lord in his glory. It was the very mark of the elect that they were permitted to behold God face to face.

And then came Jesus. And he had a vision of the invisible that gathered up within itself all the features of the picture that had gone before, and yet expanded and ennobled it until, in the sublime simplicity of his revelation, God was revealed as the Father of mankind, the Father of every human soul, so that every soul might see Him who is invisible. From that day the sight of God has been, not the portion of a favored few, but the possibility of all men, the reality to untold multitudes.

And now what should be the effect of such a revelation as this? If we look back over the stories of the men whose lives are recorded in the Bible, we can see very distinctly that the effect in every case was something profound. So ought it to be with us. But what sight do we need? What sight of the invisible is it necessary that you and I should have in order that our lives may be effectually changed? It depends upon how we stand.

Here is a life that has suddenly become conscious of the fact that it is living in awful sin. What is it that that life needs to see, my friends? It needs to

see him who is the Saviour. It needs to see him in order that the power of God's pardon may rest upon the soul, in order that the glory of God's hope may illuminate it, in order that the power of the Eternal may strengthen it. O, how dreadful it is when we look into the face of any soul that has suddenly become conscious of the horror and darkness and misery and degradation of its sin, but to whom no sight of the invisible has come! There is the wailing and gnashing of teeth; there is the outer darkness, into which no soul can enter without a fearful trembling from the sympathy that is begotten by the sight of such great agony. Do you think it is a thing that is to come only at the end of the world? Do you think it is an experience which came only in the days of old? As you turn to the biographies of men like Bunyan, and hear how the sense of the awfulness of sin shook their souls, ay, shook their very limbs with terror and apprehension, do you think that it is a nervous affection that has passed away, or that it is to be experienced perchance hereafter, in some great excitement of the human race? I tell you no. I tell you that that thing is going on in this city to-day; that there are men and women here this morning who know the horror and the agony of the discovery of sin.

Now what can we do for them? Do not let us try to soothe them by telling them that sin is not an

awful thing; do not let us talk to them as if they were nervous and apprehensive, and as if there were no reality answering to their apprehension. Let us admit that which is true, that this horror has fallen upon them because of their wickedness. But let us try to reveal to them the everlasting pardon, the eternal love, and the almighty power that are lying hidden on the background of their souls, reflected by the glory of God's spirit shining in the face of Jesus Christ, shining into their lives. If they would but fix their attention upon it, they would see the glory of the Lord, they would behold the invisible, and in the sight of that invisible they would rise up from the midst of their degradation and sin, and hear the word of the Lord, saying, "Go, and sin no more; neither do I condemn thee; go in peace."

But here is another life, a life very different from the one of which we have just spoken, a life that knows nothing of the horror and misery and apprehension of the sinner, a life that is strong in its own self-complacency, a life that is proud of its own power and its own success. And yet when we consider what is needed to be done in this world, when we consider what a perfect life would be, can we fail to feel that these men, who are so satisfied with their own success, and so proud of their own power, and so in love with their own cleverness, have seen very little of the glory and nobility of life?

They need a vision of the invisible. They need to see that in a perfect life eternal love walks hand in hand with almighty power. How little of love there is in most of these men that I have in mind! Self-absorbed, self-complacent, self-reliant, self-made, they have little pity for those who have not succeeded in the struggle for existence. They are proud, but they are not tender. Ah! if they could have the revelation of the invisible, if they could see the perfect life that was revealed in Jesus, a life of mighty power, a life of tender pity, then their lives might be ennobled, and sweetened, and made more gentle, more human, more loving, more helpful to human souls.

Or here is another life, — a life that is dull. It has tasted of many fountains, and they taste alike. It has tried to be satisfied with the things that the world has to offer, and it has found the truth of the saying, "There is a peace that the world cannot give." It has become a dull, an uninterested, a weary, dreary life. Now that life needs a new interest, and that interest cannot come from the revelation of anything that is seen, because all that is seen has been tried. There is one more hope, and that is the revelation of the unseen, the revelation of the life of Jesus; — a life that never failed to be interested, a life that went on day by day, finding that each step opened up a new vista of the glory and splendor of God, a new vista of the want and

possibility of human souls. How can any soul be dull that knows what there is to be done! How can any soul be uninterested that knows that the almighty power of God stands ready to flow down, like some great river that has been blocked by the mountains,— flow down over the parched plain, and refresh and invigorate it!

That is the possibility of every soul that knows God, to let in the stream of the divine life, and make the barren plain a rich and fertile valley. That is what will beget a new interest in life,— the interest of doing good, the interest of watching the effect of God's spirit on other souls, — ay, and on our own. The consciousness that we are being led by God, and cared for by God, and educated by him, will keep life from being dull and uninteresting, will fill it with new interest every day, and fill it with new power to accomplish the work the desire of which that new interest has begotten.

And, lastly, there are the discouraged; those who have had hope and lost it; those who have known what it was to serve God, and have grown weary of it; those who knew what it was to feel the presence of God, and now feel his presence no more. They have grown discouraged. They have said, like the man of old, "Where is the promise of his coming?" They have said, like the men that walked with Jesus without knowing that it was Jesus, "We had hoped

that it was he that would have redeemed Israel." They have felt the bitterness which wrung from the Psalmist his cry, that so many have repeated in the hundreds of years that have rolled past since it was first heard: "Why art thou so full of heaviness, O my soul, and why art thou so disquieted within me? Put thy trust in God, for I will yet thank him which is the help of my countenance and my God." Yet they find it hard to believe. And yet, if they could see, — if they could see that which Moses saw, the invisible, the King eternal, immortal, glorious, who, before the mountains were brought forth, or ever the earth or the world was made, was God from everlasting to everlasting, world without end, — such a vision, my friends, of the eternity of God would drive away the clouds of discouragement as the rising of the sun dispels the mists. Think what it was for this man, who disregarded all the powers of the earth, and said that, having seen God in the desert, he would go forth into the wilderness again to see God. Think what it was that this man did. He withstood all the powers of the world that then were, in the simple confidence that the Eternal was greater than all. Think how his faith was justified. To-day the monuments of Egypt are a great curiosity. Its splendors have passed away; its triumphs are things that we read of, and hardly believe that they once took place. The great, overwhelming civilization

built upon the writhing bodies of the wretched slaves has crumbled to the dust, and has become as a dream. We look to-day in our museums on the faces of the greatest of the kings, and smile to think how true it is of every king, that at last he shall sit down in the dust.

But think what it must have been for a man, in the day when these things that have passed away were living and awful realities, to have stood up in their midst and said, "I see him who is invisible." The sight of the invisible brought to that man a sense of the true proportion of things; and he that has a sense of the true proportion of things can never grow morbid, can never become habitually discouraged.

O, if you could have, my discouraged friend, a vision of the Eternal, who never wearies, who never sleeps, who keepeth Israel, then all the things of life would take their right proportion, and we should feel, instead of discouragement, an eagerness to undertake the work which has behind it almighty power, and is guided by the hand of Eternal Love.

And now do you ask me how this thing is to be brought about, — how we are to see the invisible? Then I say to you, my friends, that there is no force at work to-day in nature that was not at work when chaos, formless, filled space. But under the influence of the Eternal Power these forces have become man-

ifested, until we can see, in the glory of the evening sky, in the wonder of the flaming flower, in the majesty of the overtopping mountain, in the splendor of the spreading oak, in the glory of the rolling sea, — we can see the manifestation of those powers in beauty, so that they become, as I said at the beginning, an influence upon our lives which was impossible while they were hidden, wrapped up, secreted, in the womb of chaos. They have come out and have become manifested in nature, so that they are a power upon our souls to-day as we behold the vision of them.

So is it in the revelation of the divine life. There is no more of the divine life now in the universe than there has been from the beginning. But it has been manifested. It has appeared in many a holy life, in many a saintly prayer, in many a noble hymn; until at last the perfect image of the Eternal walked this earth in the person of Jesus Christ, who said to the disciple who said, "Lord, show us the Father and it sufficeth us," — "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." That is the image of the invisible, — the reflection by the Holy Spirit of God of the Eternal Reality in the character of Jesus Christ.

And they who would see that must look upon it. And they who look upon it will feel its influence and its power.

But I have said that in all these things, my friends,

the vision is of an internal revelation. And so I would not have you for one moment suppose that it is necessary for you to go out of your own lives, and by the power of your own activity go forth to meet and to see Jesus Christ. For, as Paul has said in the Epistle to the Romans, "We need not come up into heaven nor go down into hell, for he is in us, in our mouth and in our heart." The very lineaments of the character of Jesus Christ are traced upon the background of your life. And if you would look into your life by the doorway of its wants, through the window of its aspirations, then you would see the answer of Almighty God to those wants and those aspirations, and it would be found that they were the faint tracings of the outline of the character of Jesus Christ, who is the image of the Eternal God.

Look, then, into your souls, and ask yourselves what you need; and in the very moment that you ask yourself what you need you will see what is needed, and that sight is a sight of the invisible satisfaction. Any man that gives himself up to the power of the vision of the invisible becomes like the invisible, — strong, noble, pure, serene, eternal. Is not that the truth that lies back of the dream of which we read so much in the Middle Ages, that men should have the beatific vision of the Eternal Trinity? Somehow, — no doubt in a crude and materialistic form, — these men dreamed of beholding some out-

ward object that they called the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. But because its form was crude, we may not therefore conclude that there was no reality which answered to this hope. We believe that there is. We believe that the day shall come for every earnest soul when the perfect vision of that which has been seen in part shall be revealed; when the eye of the soul shall behold with perfect satisfaction the face of the Father; when the heart shall lean on the heart of the Eternal Son, as John leaned on the breast of Jesus at supper; when the mind of man shall perfectly commune with the Spirit of Truth, and in that threefold communion, under the protection of the Father, in the love of the Son, and by the power of the Spirit, find the satisfaction after which the soul had thirsted from the day it first began to consider the meaning of the mystery of life.

Strive, in your day of temptation, and trial, and burden, and sorrow, to see him who is invisible. Strive to see the image of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Look till you find the image of your Father imprinted on the background of your soul; for in the day you see the Eternal, you yourself will feel the power of the eternal life. And the end to which we travel is the answer of the cry of the religious soul, "My soul is athirst for God, yea, even for the living

God. When shall I come to appear before the presence of God?"

In the day when you and I are ready to receive the perfect revelation of the Eternal, the cry for satisfaction and for vision will be answered by Almighty God.

IX.

GAMBLING.

There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death. — PROVERBS, xvi. 25.

THE prevailing philosophy of the day is utilitarian. It teaches that the only way to learn whether an act is good or bad is to apply the test of experience. If, in the long run, it is found that a certain act results in the greatest good of the greatest number, then that act may be ticketed good. If, on the contrary, it is found that happiness is not the result of a certain act, then it may be stated that that act is wrongful. It is not my purpose to discuss the principles of this school, nor ask if that is the only test we have of right and wrong. I wish rather to call your attention to the truth in it, which is, that in the long run right produces happiness and evil misery; and then to ask you to remember that there are many cases in which it is not easy to decide by abstract reasoning whether a certain act is right or wrong, and that in those cases we

may apply with advantage the utilitarian principle of ethics.

It is sometimes supposed that this is a modern discovery; but it is not so. This is the principle underlying the Book of Proverbs. In the sixteenth chapter at the twenty-fifth verse this is stated with great clearness, "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."

As soon as we begin seriously to consider the meaning of such words as these, we are met with a difficulty. "The way seems to a man right." What more then can a man do than follow that way? Nay, must we not go farther, and say that each man ought to do what seems to him to be right without regard to consequences? Is it not the exercise of the great principle of private judgment, which no man has a right to abandon? It is this form of private judgment which the Romish controversialist delights to fasten upon. It is this confusion which leads men and women to say, However disadvantageous divorce may be to the community, in my case it seems to be right, and therefore I must follow that way. Now the answer to this sophistry is not difficult to find. The true principle of private judgment is not "A man is bound to follow the way that seems to him to be right." Such a rule would destroy society, and make progress impossible. The rule is, "No man should do that which he knows to be wrong." In

questions of morals the first essential is *prudence*, as the Proverbs so often say. It is far better that a man should stand still, make no progress, than that he should retrograde. Therefore, that a way seems to me right is no warrant for me to walk in it. On the contrary, I am bound to ask myself what the experience of mankind has shown in regard to this way. If a hundred travellers meet a man on the highway and tell him that the right hand turning brings him to a bridge which it is not safe to cross, and he persists, because the bridge seems to him strong, and is drowned, we say he was a fool. And that is the word which the Book of Proverbs is very fond of using of those who are "wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own conceit."

But I think, moreover, that in many of these so called doubtful cases of conscience it will be found that selfishness has played a part. The way seems to a man to be right because he wants it so to seem. Still there are doubtful cases. There are certain acts which, treating of them in the abstract, we can find many reasons to approve, but of which the end is the way of death.

A notable example of this is found in the vice of gambling. It is a perfect example. In the first place, there cannot be any reason assigned for its being wrong to which a more or less good answer

cannot be found. To many good people it seems to be right. On the other hand, there is no one who denies that the end thereof are the ways of death. That it is a vice which is increasing, no thoughtful observer of contemporary morals, I think, will deny.

What is gambling? It is defined as playing for money or other stake. The extent of it, however, cannot be limited to what is commonly understood by play, for it is rife in business. The difference between work and play seems to be that play is an end in itself, while work is that which produces a value. Any business so called which does not have production of value as its object is playing for a stake. That is, it hopes to gain without giving an equivalent.

Just what such business is, it is not easy for one not engaged in business to say. I think that moralists have done harm in including under the head of gambling forms of business which may be demoralizing, but which are not gambling.

Thus it is frequently said that dealing in "futures" is gambling. But I think not. If a man order ten tons of coal in June, to be delivered on the first of August, at the current price at that date, he is dealing in futures, but he is not gambling, because it is a transaction of mutual advantage. The buyer takes a risk in the hopes of getting his coal cheap, and the

dealer takes a risk in order that his teams may be employed at the dull season. The essence of gambling is not the *risk*, for that is an element in all business. It is the failure to render an equivalent for value received, and the hope that no such equivalent will be necessary.

In the same way, speculation is sometimes loosely called gambling. But that is not true of all speculation. A man buys stock at seventy. It falls to thirty. If he sells, he is not a gambler. Nor is he if the figures be reversed. There was a transaction of mutual advantage. One preferred ready money to further risk, and the other preferred to use unemployed money in the hope of a large increase. And yet, while, as I say, neither of these transactions can be called gambling, there can be no question that they have tended to cultivate the gambling spirit. It shows itself in the messenger boy who bets on the rise and fall of the market, in the bucket shop, and in the financier who bids for stock for which he cannot pay, in the hope that an upward movement will enable him to sell it without having paid for it. That this spirit is increasing in business, no one can doubt. It leads to fraud, and tempts men who think themselves honorable to circulate false reports about stock, that it may fall, or to use equally dishonorable means to raise values. In a purer moral atmosphere, we will not call the men who do such things

"bulls" and "bears"; they will be more aptly called "pigs" and "snakes."

Now the end of these things are the ways of death. All goes well until a man can stand the pressure no longer; and then, in order to divert his mind, he abandons his wife for the strange woman, whose ways go down to the grave; or he takes to drink, to steady his nerves; or throws trust money on the table, in the hope that at last he may win; or, when all is lost, and shame is about to fall on those who bear his name, blows out his brains, — dies as the fool dieth, though he be called a wise man by kindred spirits.

But the gambling in business is not the only manifestation of the spirit. If it were, I should not feel called upon to speak of it in a mixed congregation. In some cases, the contact with evil men in the business community may corrupt a youth, but I venture to think that in the large majority of cases they are corrupt before they begin their business career. It has been said that the cost of athletics in one of the colleges in this country is over twenty-five thousand dollars a year. But that takes no account of the sums of money which pass from hand to hand at every football match or base-ball game. If a man goes to a horse race, he expects to see professional gamblers flaunting their handful of bills, and crying

for bets; but it is a thing to consider, when the men who are called to be the true aristocracy of this land are found aping the look and manner of the blackleg, and turning that which is sanctioned by the authorities because it may be a healthful pastime into a degrading sport, — no longer an end in itself, no longer played for the glory of the college, but delighted in because it gives an opportunity for a vicious excitement. Nor is that all. The way of it is the way of death. It is tending more and more to become a game played not by undergraduates. Men, it is believed, enroll themselves on college books simply to play. The newspapers are full of charges and countercharges of things unworthy of gentlemen. Now when these things are considered dispassionately, men are ashamed of them. They take place because men's passions have become inflamed as a result of the stakes which are on a game. No wonder, after several years of such excitement, the monotony of legitimate business seems unbearable, and gambling is resorted to as a stimulant.

With this many people will agree, and say, "Yes, the dangers of college life are so great that I will not send my boy there, for fear he be corrupted." But what will you do with him? Will you send him to school? If so, you will soon find that gambling is as constantly practised among schoolboys as amongst collegians. I think we should stand appalled if we

knew the extent to which the boys of this community indulge in betting. Many a boy who cannot pass his preliminaries can hold his own in gambling, because he has had long practice at school. That it leads to debt, to falsehood on the part of boys who must obtain money from their parents, — yes, even to drink and drunkenness, — is a fact known to some of you, if not to all. It is not the college which corrupts the boy: it is the boy who corrupts the college. When these things come to light, the parents say, "What shall we do?" Perhaps they try a private school, where only "good boys" are admitted. But it does not follow that a boy is bad because he bets. Boys are imitative; they do what they see others do. They want to be manly; they want to do the same things their uncles and fathers do. And if the best boy in the community is sent to the most exclusive school in the city, it will be found that he has fallen into this evil way if those whom he looks up to walk in it.

So, then, we must turn from the appalling spectacle of gambling in business, the disgusting degradation of sport in college, the corrupting practice of betting in schools, and look in upon the family, and ask what has the home influence done to guard against this growing evil. My friends, I think you will say at once, too little. Perhaps some of you will go farther, and say the children have been made familiar with

gambling while in the nursery. If a little boy admires a charm that his father wears and learns that he won it from a friend on a bet, if a little girl asks with delight where the new ornament came from and learns that her mother won it at cards, the bloom has been taken off their sense of honor; and we need not utter our philippics against State Street, nor indulge in tirades against the college, nor despair of the school, for we have tracked the evil home, and found that it is an honored guest where we should look to find only that which is lovely and honest, and of good report.

And now some of you will think it is time that there should be a rejoinder; and that I will try and put as fairly as possible.

In the first place, it will be said, gambling is the harmful excess of a thing in itself harmless. It is like drunkenness, — a vice which all good people condemn, and which fanatics would prevent by the prohibition of even a single glass of wine. In discussing an evil it is necessary to distinguish between the use and abuse of a practice. The loss or gain of large sums of money on a horse race is a bad thing; the winning of ten-cent points at whist has no evil in it. Now, it is right to admit that this position has the approval of many distinguished moralists, and is not to be lightly set aside. If it be true,

then the denunciation of petty playing for stakes is as likely to produce a reaction as the denunciation of the temperate use of alcohol. But suppose for a moment that it be true, — suppose it seemeth to a man to be right, — is it not admitted that the end thereof are the ways of death? And if so, are we not called upon to deny ourselves an indulgence which, though harmless in itself, is productive of great evil? It may be answered, No. I am not called upon to eschew the use of wine in the privacy of my own home because a man is making a beast of himself around the corner; no more am I called upon to give up my whist party, where we play for small stakes, because some man at the club is wasting his substance at poker.

But the answer, I think, lies here. You may use your wine not simply because it pleases your palate, — that would be the extreme of selfishness; you may use it because it is good for you in small quantities; but did any one ever hold that playing for small stakes was a good? No, the most that was ever said by its advocates is that it is harmless in small quantities. And, again, you may use your wine believing that you are setting a good example, — believing that intemperance can best be met, not by prohibition, but by the temperate use of light beverages. But did any one ever believe that playing for small stakes prevented a man or boy

from playing for larger ones? No, my friends; the analogy will not bear examination. Admit, if you will, that playing for small stakes is not wrong, the question for you to ask is this: Considering the spirit of gambling in business, considering the degradation of sport in college, considering the demoralization of boys in school, am I not called upon to deny myself that which I do not consider wrong for fear of having an evil influence in the community?

That is my reply to the first objection. The second objection is this. Gambling is defined as the receipt of money without the exchange of an equivalent. But what is meant by an equivalent? Certainly not an equivalent sum of money or tangible goods. When I go to the theatre I pay a certain sum of money to see a play; the equivalent is the pleasure I receive. Very well, if I play a game with my friend for a certain sum of money and I lose, the equivalent is found in the excitement which I had in trying not to lose. The answer is, that in the first case you paid for a commodity which was the result of work on the part of the actor, and was therefore a legitimate business transaction; whereas in the second case you took from your friend something which he did not mind losing, perhaps, but still you took it from him because you outwitted him. We have become so familiar with this method of outwitting one another that we have become callous to

the essential of it. But suppose we tried a new method of arriving at the same result, I think we should see what I wish to point out. Suppose instead of playing whist, two gentlemen were to stand up in a drawing-room and agree to try to rob one another for ten minutes, each to keep what he seized; or suppose we met a friend coming out of the club, and asked him where he got his scarf-pin, and he replied, "I won it from a man in a pickpocket match." We should have no difficulty then in seeing that the obtaining of another man's goods, whether in large or small quantities, as the result of *outwitting* him, is a degrading practice, which must tend to blunt the sense of honor and destroy self-respect. And while that is more apparent in the case where large sums are at stake, yet the principle is the same in the smallest sum. And it is that consideration which leads me to feel that not only is gambling an evil because of its effects, but that it is an evil in itself, because it makes it possible for a man to receive from a friend that which the friend must give him because he has been outwitted. To the loser it is a humiliation, and to the gainer it is a degradation.

And so, my friends, whether you agree with me or not in regard to the attempt which I have made to point out the essential evil of gambling, yet I beg you to consider the end. It is the way of death, —

death of peace in the home, truth in school, decency in college, and honor in business. Ought it not, then, to be banished from the family?

We are in the season of Lent, — the season in which our Church calls on us to consider the sacrifice of the Son of God, calls on us to ask ourselves what is to be the end of our life. I have tried to point out to you the end of one practice which is growing frequent; but I would not leave it until you turn from all questions of expediency and ask yourselves, How does it appear when we consider Jesus Christ the end of our conversation, — the end to which a righteous character tends? There can be but one answer. He found time, even in the awful stress of the great pressure of his short life, to turn aside and refresh himself by entering into the simple joys of the Galilean village; he did not disdain the great feast which an admirer prepared for him. His gentle irony showed how the sweet laughter might have been heard from those divine lips had the world to whom he came received him. So that his life gives no countenance to ascetic gloom. But if we ask ourselves whether he with his perfect faith in God his Father would have entered into any pastime which, by its prostitution of the noble spirit of adventure, would have produced the feverish anxiety which destroys faith in God, — whether he who was the embodiment of sublime self-respect would have amused

himself by tarnishing it, — whether he who loved the souls of men so as to lay down his life for them would have given occasion to a little child to stumble, we have no difficulty in finding the answer. If, then, he whose passions were held in perfect control, whose love burned strong, and whose self-respect knew no moments of remorse, — if he could not have done such things without loss, what must be the result for you and me? We call ourselves his followers, but we have moments when we seem contemptible to ourselves, unworthy of God's salvation. Our passions are ready to spring upon us when we least expect it, and overpower us; our love of our fellow men is often discolored by hatred. We then cannot afford to do anything that will lessen self-respect, or inflame passion, or weaken brotherly love. "There is a way that seemeth unto a man right, but the end thereof are the ways of death."

X.

THE NEWSPAPER.

When thou buildest a new house, then thou shalt make a battlement for thy roof, that thou bring not blood upon thy house, if any man fall from thence. — DEUTERONOMY, xxii. 8.

THE spirit which breathes through the Book of Deuteronomy is very different from that which animates our modern civilization. The latter says, Let each man look out for himself. There are, indeed, laws for the safeguard of the public, but they proceed upon the supposition that each man is bound to guard against accident; and the liability of the employer is carefully limited to accidents which are met with in the line of the duty for which an individual has been engaged, so that if an employee, in order to oblige another, steps aside from his post, and is caught in the revolving wheel and crushed, the company is not accountable. It is not my purpose to discuss this matter. I merely wish to call your attention to it, that, in the contrast with the spirit of the Hebrew law, the difference may be clearly seen. For in that it was enacted, that if a

man came to visit a neighbor, and, being led to what answered to the drawing-room of a modern house, — the flat roof, screened with plants, and strewn with rugs, — fell from thence and was killed, the host was guilty of his blood, because he had not built high enough the battlement of his house. It was not enough that a man should guard himself against accident, it was not enough that a man should tell his children not to go too near the edge, nor even to warn his friend. If his battlement was not high enough to prevent such an accident, he was guilty of his neighbor's blood.

It was believed by the Jew that this law was the expression of the will of Jehovah. As we read it, we feel that it is the expression of a truth too often forgotten in legislation. A paternal government would take all responsibility from the individual by protecting each man as a child; the anarchist would leave such license to the individual that no man should have cause to consider his neighbor. The Hebrew did neither the one nor the other. His law said, If your brother come to harm through your carelessness, you are a guilty man. It appealed to the conscience of the individual so to construct his house that no man might be the worse for his having lived.

Our subject, then, is man's responsibility for his neighbor. The subject is an immense one, for it

touches every point of contact between man and man. It would be well, then, if the housekeeper were to ask what is the result of her example upon the servants who live in her house; for the host to ask what is his point of contact with his brother man, and whether the duties thereof are fulfilled. Does the merchant misrepresent his goods? Or does he allow a misrepresentation to go uncorrected? Does the shopkeeper sell as pure what will poison little children, and put a part of the profit in the collection to convert the heathen? Does the lawyer seek to make peace, or does he keep silent, lest a compromise should reduce the fee? Does the doctor ask for a consultation when he is in doubt? or does he administer drugs, hoping that nature will save his reputation? Is there any man here whose business is harmful to his brother man? Do you say that such questions are an insult to you? They are not so meant. If such things are, it is in the large majority of cases because men have grown up under the false notion that each man must look out for himself, and that we have no responsibility for the health, the comfort, the property, or the morals of our neighbors. Indeed we have. And if each one of us were to look into his life, I doubt not we should find that we had not obeyed the injunction of the old law to build a battlement for the roof, and that we are guilty of some injury to our brother.

If each of us were to do that, what sermons would be preached this day! Each man at once preacher and hearer! But if you will not preach to yourselves you must be without a sermon. I cannot take up these matters in detail and deal with them. I cannot speak of the lawyer's sins while the merchant thanks God that he is not as that man. I would rather speak of some special manifestation of the evil which is not personal, or rather is so personal that it applies to every one of us. What shall it be? What one great enterprise of modern life touches you and me? You anticipate me in the answer. It is the Newspaper.

There is no agency that can for a moment be compared with it. It is as permeating as the atmosphere. Its influence is stronger than the law. It has the power of the Popes in the Middle Ages. It binds men's sins upon them, and they are bound. It looses the notorious renegade, and he is received again into society. It is a necessity; men chafe if it be ten minutes late in the morning; they must have it on Sunday. Great numbers of people take one in the morning and another in the evening. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that it is the only form of literature that multitudes in this land ever read. As the taste and character of our fathers was built upon the Bible, so is the taste and character

of the great mass of the sixty millions of the people of this republic fashioned by the daily paper. Our first feeling ought to be one of gratitude. That there can be any means of reaching our fellow men and speaking to them every day; cheering them with good news; telling them, with awful solemnity, of the sins and sorrows of our brethren; pointing with strong faith to the future, so full of unexpected possibilities, in which every man shall have an opportunity to develop his personality, — why, it is almost too good to be true! What would not Paul have done, had it been possible in his day to speak to great multitudes of the meaning of the Divine life? What would not John have done, who laid down his tired pen after he had written his little Book, saying, "Many other things Jesus did which are not written, for even the world itself could not contain the things which could be written"!

It cannot fail, then, to be a subject of momentous importance to every one of us. A thing which is a necessity, which speaks to great multitudes every day, which is never weary, but can multiply its copies a million times, must surely be the greatest influence for good or evil in our day.

I have said that it has taken the place of the Bible in the family life. It is therefore not unfair to compare it with the Bible. The Bible, we have come to learn, is not one book, but the literature of the

Hebrew people bound together for convenience. It is a picture of Hebrew life for more than a thousand years. Now, that is exactly what the newspaper declares itself to be, — a picture of life. It says: "If you do not like the picture, change the original. We have nothing to do with that. What we undertake to do is to hold up a mirror to the world once a day, that every man may see what life is. We do it as a business enterprise, and are no more responsible for the face that you see than the photographer for the figure on the negative."

The first question, then, which we have to ask, is this: Is the daily paper a portrait of life? Is it a composite photograph, so to speak, that you have seen this morning of the American life of the last week? I answer with indignation, *It is not.* It is a photograph fit for the rogues' gallery. It is a picture made up from the faces of one saint and many murderers, adulterers, false swearers, whoremongers, thieves, and reprobates. It is an outrage to say that this is a picture of life. It is no more a picture of life than the Charles Street jail is a picture of Boston society, — no more a picture of modern civilization than the garbage and dead wood floating in the harbor is a picture of the glorious port that threw open its gates with this morning's sun to greet the native and welcome the immigrant.

It is a *part* of life, — a dreadful part. Perhaps it

should be told, as some of the awful stories of shame and lust are told in the Bible. But how shall it be told? We read that there came to Jesus men who called themselves religious, leading a sinful woman, and began to give him the details of the poor creature's sin; but Jesus stooped down, and wrote on the ground as though he heard them not. They might with unblushing cheek point to a sister's shame; but he bowed himself down, feeling the shame that neither the brazen men nor the frightened woman felt. Is that the way the newspaper tells of shame? It is not. It is blazoned on the page. A story that, if it were told in its naked truth, would be too sickening for any but a hardened sinner to read, is dressed in a certain tawdry finery and made of interest, so that the young read it and suck in the poison which some day will break out in scab and blotch, like the leprosy of old.

Yet the boast of the newspapers has been that they painted life as it is. If they have not done this, then they have slandered their countrymen. And that is what I deliberately charge a large part of the press of this country with doing. They gather up the exciting and sensational events, and color them still more intensely, and declare that they are giving us and our children a picture of American life, after eighteen hundred years of the influence of Jesus. It is an outrage. And what must be the result? Why,

it is inevitable that those who accept this picture as true must come to feel that vice is the rule and virtue the exception. Yet if that were so, society could not hold together. If this country is truly represented by the daily paper, it is a nest of iniquity into which one or two saints have wandered by mistake and got lost. What appeal, then, can you make to your boy to be industrious and honest, God-fearing and reverent, if these virtues are the rare exception? There is nothing a boy so dreads as being thought odd. The boys who were brought up on the Bible learned that vice was the awful violation of the social order. The boy who is brought up on the newspaper will learn that vice is the rule, and so have his moral judgment utterly perverted. Every speech he listens to in which the greatness of his country is spoken of will deepen his deadly heresy that sin is no disgrace to a people, and that smartness, not righteousness, exalteth a nation.

That this is a true statement of the case many of you believe. There may be some, however, who will say: You are falling into the error you have condemned. You are drawing a dark picture, and implying that all newspapers are guilty, whereas it is only true of some. That I am willing to grant. But I say, let any man go to a new city, and buy the first newspaper offered him, and see whether or not the news columns are not largely given up to records

of crime or filthy scandal. Take a composite photograph of the great daily newspapers of this country, and see if you do not get a face at once disgusting and saddening.

Again, it may be said, Even to such papers you do not give the credit they deserve. They are a powerful aid to the police; from their Argus-eyed staff no criminal can escape. Supposing it were true, it is no excuse; in a well regulated municipality the sewers and cesspools are cleaned at night.

Once more, You forget that by showing the inevitable result of crime they have a moral influence in the community.

There never was a greater fallacy. The State of New York has been compelled to pass a law forbidding the description by the newspapers of the execution of criminals. It has been found too demoralizing. That that law can be enforced no one believes, because the lawmakers will break it in order to satisfy their curiosity. It used to be said that the public execution of a criminal deterred others from a like offence. No one believes that now. The silent and swift cleaving of the sword of justice is the only thing that will strike terror into the mind of the evil-doer. The kind-hearted people who distribute the newspapers in the jails are actuated by most worthy motives, but in my judgment they do a vast deal

of harm. I have had too many inmates of a cell show me with ill concealed pride the account of their trial, the appearance which they presented, and the sympathy of the spectators, not to have learned that what the criminal wants is not to know the news, but only to see his name in print and to feel that he has at last accomplished the object of his life, which was to raise himself out of the obscurity in which he had lived. To find himself one of a class to whom the whole community is giving attention is the ambition of many a youth who is not naturally vicious nor depraved. That is my judgment; and I believe it will be approved by most of those who have had dealings with the criminal classes. Therefore the newspaper offsets any benefit it may be to the community by the reward it presents to the criminal.

I do not speak of the way in which homes are invaded, of the paid guest whom the society papers send to lunches and receptions, to the gossip bought from servants or the web of scandal spun from a hasty word, for that would lead us to the consideration of the so called society journal, and there are depths into which a decent congregation ought not to be asked to descend. There is a certain brutal frankness in the way in which the morning paper deals with the shame of life. But the society paper slinks in after dark and covers its shame with diamonds and plush, and tells silly people that the

society which they long to enter is after all a very wicked thing, though, it must be admitted, very delightful. The Turk respects the modest woman who goes veiled through the streets, but in this enlightened land ruffians are allowed to enter the drawing-room and tear the veil from the face of the bride, or show to a gaping world the calm face of the dead.

Now who is responsible for this state of affairs? The proprietors, stockholders, editors, and reporters say they are not. They declare that they take no pleasure in such things, — that it is what the public demands, — and that they are no more responsible for the taste of the public than a hotel keeper, who takes a mutton chop and a boiled potato for his dinner, is responsible for the disgusting waste of food which is spread on the table every evening for his guests. The public demands it, and he who caters for the public must not serve to suit himself, but the public.

It might as well be said at once, that there is no argument which would influence a man who seriously believed in this illustration. Yet one cannot but foresee how flaming would be the denouncement of the hotel which should take the fatal step from bad taste to slow poison. Let the Hotel Vendôme find a receipt of arsenic or strychnine which will make the food more palatable even than it is now; let it in-

crease its patronage by such means; let some doctor show that strong men and fair women and little children are being slowly poisoned, — not so fatally that they cannot eat, but only so that they can no longer be of the value to the community that they once were, — and I think the able editor might be left to point out the immorality of giving to people that which is destructive, simply because they ask for it. I think we should hear something about duty to the public, and the shameful love of money, and many other beautiful moral sentiments, perhaps joined with a suggestion that the Back Bay is, after all, no better than the South Cove. Such an argument cannot be treated seriously. If it were carried to its logical conclusion, there is no den of iniquity winked at by the law which it might not defend, — no outrage in history, from the Black Hole of Calcutta to Libby Prison, that it might not justify. The argument is as old as iniquity itself. "When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but rather that a tumult was made, he took water and washed his hands, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person; see ye to it." And the voices of the multitude prevailed. Did Pilate cleanse his conscience when he washed his hands?

There is one count in this indictment against the newspaper which may not be developed, and yet it may not be ignored. Not only are shameful things

treated as if they were the rule, killing self-respect in the nation; not only is the sacredness of private life violated, to the destruction of national modesty; not only is crime rewarded by giving it the desired publicity; not only is slander spread broadcast over the land, killing peace; not only is there deliberate misrepresentation of political opponents, — but to all this is added the worst of all, the daily press is made the medium of communication between vice and its victims. Not only is it a signpost of iniquity to the lovers of evil, but it is a snare to the innocent, who come up to this great city year after year to be snared, and caught, and taken.

What answer is made to this charge? It is, That evil does exist; and that the newspaper is not bound to look after children who do not know what life means; nor is it bound to inquire into the character of its advertisements. To that I answer, in the words of Christ, "It must needs be that offences come." Life being what it is, it cannot fail that many will be made to stumble, "but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh."

And now, my friends, who is that man? For to talk about evil in the abstract, and not to show where the evil is caused, is worse than useless. I say, Who is the man by whom this offence cometh? Is it the owner, editor, reporter, printer? I have said that I thought their sin was great; I have com-

pared their excuse to that of Pilate; and yet we must not forget that Jesus, in his perfect justice, admitted that there was something in Pilate's plea, "He that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin." Pilate did what the multitude desired. It was the multitude, led by the religious Pharisee and the cultivated Sadducee, that had the greater sin. And so is it to-day. If religious men and educated men read those newspapers whose evil influence they recognize, they are responsible for them. Go into any office to-morrow morning, and turn over the newspapers, and see who make these papers possible. Ask the man who sits at the desk what he thinks of it all, and he will say, Well, they are pretty bad; but they cater to the criminal class, and to their friends.

Why, my friends, there are not enough criminals and their friends in this Commonwealth to support a newspaper a week. The sales are large, because people who are counted respectable like to read them, because men who will not let them come into their homes for fear of corrupting their children and servants will read them in the office, and then hand them to the office boy, — that is, to some one's else child.

Is that all? No: a newspaper is not supported by its readers; it is supported by its advertisements. Every man who puts an advertisement into a disrep-

utable paper is helping it, and every firm which keeps one standing there is supporting it. Why is it done? Because, say men, we are dependent upon the people for customers; we must advertise where we shall be seen. How does that differ from the excuse of the paper itself, which said, I must be what the people want. If I pay money to a grog-shop to let me hang a sign over the bar, I am in part responsible for the evil of that shop. Well, if the saloon has destroyed its thousands, the press has destroyed its ten thousands. *And for this evil we Christian people are responsible.* Let the sales of any paper fall off two hundred copies to-morrow, and the owners will consider. Let fifty reputable firms withdraw their advertisements, and the tone of the paper will change.

"When thou buildest a new house, then thou shalt build a battlement for thy roof, that thou bring not blood upon thy house, if any man fall from thence." Our fathers laid the strong foundations of a new house, of a better civilization, and of a purer social order on the site of this city. Of that new house of civilization the newspaper is the roof. It is our glory. For energy, for generosity, for splendid organization, it is the crown of our business life. From it, as from a high roof, we ought to have a sight of the glory of the land: it should be the meeting place of wise and noble minds. It should stand in a purer atmosphere

than that of the streets below. From it we should see the squalor and the sin and the wrong-doing, but we should see too that the school-house on the hill is mightier than the ignorance of the degraded, that the bank is built on the sure foundation of public honor, that the drawn curtains shade a picture of a home of purity and peace and joy, and that, above all, the church's spire points to the heavenly city, where nothing that is unclean can enter.

My friends and fellow Christians, it is a thing for you to consider. Before it be too late, let us build a battlement for our roof, lest our children and the stranger fall therefrom, and upon us be their blood.

XI.

THE DOUBLE CRUCIFIXION.

God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. — GALATIANS, vi. 14.

IF any one had told St. Paul fourteen years before these words were written that he would ever thus express his thought of the glory of life, he would have repudiated the suggestion with scorn. The cross of Christ had changed that man so that he had before him an altogether new and different ideal of life. Let us look at it awhile this morning, and ask ourselves what Paul meant when he said that the world was crucified to him and he was crucified to the world, and that in the cross, the instrument of that suffering, he gloried.

The crucifixion of the world to Paul by the cross of Christ was the crucifixion of the world to him by the power of Christ, to whom also the world had been crucified. What does that mean? The world, that which stood around the life of Christ, was crucified

to him, that is to say, was killed by a life that caused great suffering and great agony, until at last those things that surrounded his life were dead to him, and had no longer any power over him. Does it seem strange to you that it should have been necessary for Christ to have passed through this experience of the crucifixion of the world unto himself? It will not if you remember that he was the Perfect Man, if you remember that every experience of humanity had to pass through Jesus's life, and that sin did not pass through it because sin is no necessary experience of humanity. Then you will see how necessary it was even for Christ that the world should be crucified to him.

Let us look at it for a moment, and see what it was that was taking place in the life of our Master. We must not think of the crucifixion as a thing that took place in the short space between the sixth and ninth hours of Good Friday. The crucifixion of Christ was consummated on Good Friday, but it had been going on through his whole life; first the crucifixion of the world unto him, and then the crucifixion of himself unto the world. When he went up to Jerusalem full of the thought of redeeming his own people Israel, and they would not listen to his words, there was the beginning of the crucifixion of the world unto Christ. The hope of reforming the people whom he loved, the Jewish nation whom he

desired to save, was killed before his eyes; and he was obliged to give up his ministry in Jerusalem and begin in Galilee. And the same thing was repeated there; the fickleness of the people soon showed the Master that the hope he had had in Galilee was killed. The weakness and fickleness of the disciples whom Jesus had chosen and trained, and whom he loved with an exceeding great love, was another crucifixion of the world to the Master, until at last his eyes were set towards the consummation of it all, and he knew that his ministry had failed, as men count failure, and that all that he had hoped to do when he began to preach the Gospel of the kingdom had been frustrated. Little by little the world had been crucified to him; little by little the hopes, the desires, the longings of his heart, had fallen dead at his feet, until he went up for that last great struggle in the city of Jerusalem; and there we find it manifesting itself in all its intensity at the end. He enters into the garden, and he prays: "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me. Father, if it be possible, do not crucify the world to me; if it be possible, let me live and redeem the world; if it be possible, bring men to the knowledge of what it is to be thy sons without this awful, shameful death; nevertheless, not my will, but thine, be done. If it must be done, then, O Father, I will submit."

That was the crucifixion of the world unto Christ. Everything that he touched, everything that he desired, one by one had fallen dead before him, until at last he stood out in the presence of his Father, forsaken of all men, without hope, without expectation from the world. The world of things that could be seen or touched was dead to him, and he stood in the presence of his Father to do His will.

Now, that same experience had come to Paul. Paul too had known the experience of his Master. He had desired to upbuild the Jewish Church, and had been very zealous in that faith, and had seen it die. He had desired to go up to Jerusalem after his conversion, and enter into the company of the Apostles, and unite himself with them, and do their work; but they would not receive him. He had gone down to Antioch, and had the larger revelation of the Gospel which was to bring all men unto the worship of Jesus Christ. Then began the long and weary life when he was persecuted in every city, when every dream that he had ever had in the schools of Tarsus or the streets of Antioch was killed one after another. Read that wonderful story that he tells us in the Epistle to the Corinthians of what his life was: "In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things

that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches."

Paul's life was one long life of crucifixion. All that he loved, desired, and wished to attain was cast down, until at last he lay in the dark dungeon at Rome, waiting for the executioner that should lead him to his Lord. The world was crucified to him. What sorrow, what suffering, what disappointment, what agony of spirit, as one dream after another melted away, and he bowed his head in the power of his Master and said: "O Lord, if this thorn depart not from me, thy will be done. The grace of God is better than the strength of man."

Now, are there not some here — rather, do not all of us know something about this crucifixion of the world to ourselves? The failure of health, the failure of property, the loss of those who are dear to us, the ending of our dreams, the beginning of that long life of tribulation without which we may not enter into the kingdom of God, — do we not know it, every one of us here to-day, each telling it to himself as he stands under the shadow of the cross, each asking himself, What does the shedding of the blood of Jesus Christ mean for me? Why is the crucifixion of the world necessary for me? O, what sorrows some of you have known, — what trials, what disappointments, what weariness of spirit!

What are we to say about it? Let us try and say, as Paul did: "By the power of the cross of Christ, the world is crucified unto me; those things which were once a power in my life, those things for which I once lived, without which it seemed impossible that life would continue, have been taken from me; and I bow my head and say, 'Not my will, but thine, O God, be done.'"

When we think of it, when we let our minds wander to-day beyond this little company that is gathered here, beyond all the companies that, throughout the world, are gathered together to-day under the shadow of the cross; when we think how this crucifixion of the world unto the spirit of man is going on all over the world, in the darkness of Africa, where the Gospel has never been preached, in the twilight of Japan, where men know not whether to turn again to idols, or to the gracious Spirit that is now stretching out His hands unto them, — all through the world to-day there is going on the crucifixion of the world unto human spirits. Children born to die, women without strength for life's struggle, men meeting one disappointment after another, — a life of pain and suffering, sickness, agony, fearfulness, and death, — is not that a picture of this world to-day? Men do not tell it to one another; we do not know what is going on. But while I speak to you now, here in our own city, there

are men and women crying with great agony, "Lord God, take only *this* cup from me; do not call on me to endure this sacrifice. O, save to me some part of that world without which I cannot live!" Think of their agony, their fear, the awfulness of the pain of the men and women who find that the world is crucified to them, and yet cannot bring themselves to be crucified to the world! What is the suffering of any Christian, what is the suffering of Jesus Christ, my friends, compared with the agony, which he could not know, of the soul which refuses to bow down its head to God? Every soul that has submitted, every soul that has said, "Lord, thy will be done; I will bear it; I do not understand it; I cannot imagine why my life has been what it has been; I do not know anything about it, but I will bow down my head and worship," — that soul has known what it is to have the world crucified unto it, to have one thing after another which was the joy, the glory, and the strength of its life killed, and yet to live unto God.

Now, the other side of it: "By which I am crucified unto the world." Turn back again to the life of the Master. We have seen what it was for the world to be crucified to Him. See what it meant for Him to be crucified to the world. There were certain things which Jesus wanted above all things, as we learn from the Gospel story, especially the Gospel of

Saint John. He wanted to save this world, and he went up to Jerusalem and saw that it was all to end in failure, as men count failure. And one day as he stood on the steps of the temple, there came to him one of his disciples, and said that there were certain Greeks that had come up to the festival and desired to see him, and Jesus's spirit arose at one bound to the thought of the glory which was now opening before him, and he stretched out his hands to receive those Greeks, and to make known to the world at large that Gospel which was being rejected by the Jews, and then drew back and said, "Father, my soul is troubled." It was like the stream that dashes down the mountain side to reach the ocean, and finds its way blocked by some great boulder that has rolled down the mountain and choked the current of the stream. The stream is troubled, and knows not whether it is to pass all barriers and reach the ocean, or whether it is to turn and climb again the hill from which it has descended. So it was with Jesus. He knew not what to do. "Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name." That was the prayer. The world had been crucified to him, he would be crucified to the world. He would not accept this opening that was coming for a larger revelation of the Gospel, because to do so would be to turn away

from the Father. "O Father, glorify thy name. Yes, the Gospel I do wish to preach beyond all other things; but if that is not the way, then thy will be done. Glorify Thyself in some way."

And when it was done, see the peace that came to him, and how he calmly turned to those men and said, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. I know the Father's will; I am crucified to the world; I will die and bring forth fruit." He desired to save those Jews whom he loved with exceeding great love, whom he desired above all to know the truth and the grace of God. And one day as he stood talking to those men in Jerusalem, and saw that every effort he made resulted in failure; that they deliberately tried to trap him in his talk, that they might have something to accuse him of before the governor; that in every way he was thwarted and hindered, he crucified himself unto the world, and said to them, "When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then ye shall know that I am he. It will not end in failure. Ye will not hear my words. Ye will not come to me that ye might have life. Ye will crucify me; then shall ye know that I am he." In order that they might know that he was the Son of God, the Messiah, the Chosen of Israel, their Saviour, he would be crucified; and when they had worked out their sinful will upon him,

having bowed his head and given up the ghost, there were men that would cry, "Truly, this was the Son of God."

How many things we might speak of in which the Master crucified himself to the world. In that last great struggle in the garden of which we have spoken, in which the world was being crucified unto him, his first prayer was, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me"; but it was not the last. Jesus prayed again, "Father, thy will be done"; and the strength came to him, and he rose calm and placid, full of serenity and sweetness, dignity and power, — no trace of the agony, no trace of the sweat, no trace of the anguish of spirit. And when poor Peter comes with his sword and says, "Lord, shall we smite with the sword?" he answers, "I could pray to my Father, and instantly have legions of angels. But how could the Scripture be fulfilled?" To fulfil the Scripture, to carry out that word that God had been prophesying through the spirit of man in all the ages, Jesus would crucify himself unto the world. After that there was no more conflict. He had power to lay down his life, and he had power to take it again. That power came to him because the world had been crucified, because he had crucified himself unto the world, — the power to lay down his life, and the power to take it again, — that was the triumph of the Master.

Paul knew that triumph also. Paul also had been

through that awful experience of the crucifixion of the world unto himself, and had been through the other experience of crucifying himself unto the world, of submitting to God's will. Yes, that was the first step; but far more than that of rejoicing in God's will, of being so glad God's will should be accomplished, of being so full of joy because God should be known to him more and more, and God's presence should be a benediction upon his life, that nothing seemed too hard unto Paul for him to do; and he spoke these words that we find so difficult to understand, until at least we begin to crucify ourselves unto the world: "I rejoice in tribulation." "When I am weak, then am I strong." "None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus."

What a different spirit, what a new thought, what a splendid ideal, had taken possession of this man! He had crucified himself unto the world; the things for which he had lived, which stood all about his life, — wealth, learning, success, popularity, — these things no longer moved him; he cared not for them. His life had a new ideal; it was to finish the work of his Master, and accomplish the ministry that had been committed unto him by the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, any man or woman who, having passed through the awful conflict of crucifying the world unto himself, rises into that higher experience of sacrifice, the power by which he crucifies himself unto the world, — offers himself a willing sacrifice unto God, — has received the blessing of the cross of Jesus Christ.

And if what we have said be true, then we need not say much about the glory, because that glory follows so inevitably from this thought. For what would have been the life of Paul, — ay, what would have been the life of the Master, — if the world had not been crucified unto him? How satisfied Paul might have been with the things he saw and heard! How possible it was that the Master should have lived out a long life and died in his old age, no man knowing the glory of the cross! But it was because he allowed the world to be crucified unto him, and crucified himself unto the world, that he began to walk that path that led to Calvary, and endured all the sufferings of which we read to-day. And out of it came the glory, the certainty that he was doing God's will, — the consciousness, realized for the first time in the history of man, that the glory of man consists, not in having his own way, not in following up the little scheme of life with which he had begun, but that the real glory of man consists in finding the will of God, in sub-

mitting himself absolutely to it. Thus submitting himself, one knows the glory which comes to him who knows and sees and serves God, because his life has been caught up from the low plane on which it used to stand, and is now on the Mount of Transfiguration, filled with eternal life.

If there be any one here to-day, my friends, who is all confused and perplexed about his life, then let him turn to the cross of Jesus Christ.

You may wonder that I have said nothing about sin; you may wonder that I have said nothing about a redemption from sin by the cross. But indeed, if I have made myself plain, I have been talking about the redemption from sin all the time. For what is sin?—not in its manifestation, but in its root? It is selfishness; it is self-centredness; it is the life apart from God. And through the agony of the crucifixion of the world unto himself, and through the sorrow and the suffering of the weeks of crucifixion of self unto the world, the Master did the will of the Father, and entered into such communion with the Father as never was possible until the very springs of his life were discovered, and the balm of God's love could enter into the very pierced heart. Then he knew the glory; then he would not have turned back from the cross; and the jeers that fell on his dying ear, "If thou be the Son of God,

save thyself and come down from the cross," had no power, because he was upheld as he never could have been upheld but by the love and the power of the Father.

"Neither count I my life dear unto myself." The man that can say that has had the root of sin destroyed in him. It has been the cross of Jesus Christ that has revealed unto us that sorrow does not mean the wrath of God, but that sorrow may be the path of the elect by which they may walk to their eternal glory; and that the splendor and the glory and the power of life are found in that moment when the human soul has not only yielded itself to God, but even in the shedding of its blood has cried to God for that strength and that joy and that peace and that glory which belong to the sons of God, and which only the selfishness of sin prevents entering into the life of every one of us.

"God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." The world has been crucified unto me, and I am being crucified unto the world; may that be, if not the profession of our experience, at least the deepest prayer that we put up to-day, as we stand by the cross of Jesus Christ.

XII.

THE NATURALNESS OF THE RESURRECTION.

For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. — St. Mark, iv. 28.

WHAT is it that constitutes growth? What are its essential conditions? The first is a seed containing potentiality, and the second is the ever present, all-powerful surrounding soil. Given those two things, a seed containing within itself potentiality and an earth or nature full of power surrounding the seed, and the result will be that the earth will bring forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. Look at these words in the original, and you will see that the saying is stronger than it appears here in our English translation. What Jesus really said was, "The earth bringeth forth fruit automatically."

There is no miracle about the growing of the things upon this earth. That is the conclusion that we have come to as the result of all the study of nature that has occupied the minds of men now for so many

years: that there is nothing miraculous in the process that is going on here upon this planet, and that there is nothing miraculous in the result produced by the action of all-powerful forces upon infinite possibilities. There is nothing miraculous, never any intervention of external power in the long process; and no miracle, no flashing down of Divine power from the heavens above to produce at the end the glory toward which that thing which was hidden in the dark earth has been tending, through the darkness up into the light. Nothing miraculous at all.

And philosophy has reached the same conclusion. Given what we see here upon this earth, and man, the family, society, state, and church, have automatically been evolved. There is no miracle in the process. There is no miracle in the result. How modern this word of Jesus sounds: "The earth bringeth forth fruit automatically; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear."

Is that the last word that the student of nature or that the philosopher has to say about the process and the product of life? It is not. No miracle in the growth, no miracle in the result. But turn over the seed and dissect it: lay it open. It is not that which we see on the outside that is the seed. Lay it open once more. It is not that which we then see which contains within it the potentiality of the lusty blade, and the strong stalk, and the flaming calyx, and the

luscious fruit. A little farther, and yet it is not even that. At last we come to something so minute that the eye of man can no longer trace it, and placed under the microscope we are not sure that the eye has seen that in which the secret and mystery of life is hid. That in that little embryo, curled all about within its surrounding nourishment, there should lie the potentiality of the oak that shall spread its mighty branches over the plain, — that that should be, is the miracle and wonder of life.

Given that, given that seed, and given also a nature surrounding that seed, pulsating through every atom of matter in order that that seed may develop its potentiality into perfect actuality, — that is the other mystery and miracle of life; — a miracle, a mystery, a wonder, that all men are beginning to feel to-day as they have never felt before, and to cry, Back of all phenomena lies the unfathomable abyss of wonder. But given the wonder, given the seed, and given the surrounding earth, and then the growth of the blade and the ear and the full corn in the ear is automatic. There is no miracle in the process nor in the result, because the miracle is at the beginning.

Apply these thoughts to the story that we have come together to-day to hear recounted once more, and on account of which to sing our praise and thanksgiving unto God, — the story of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

There are men, perhaps they are here, who say that the whole thing is so incredible that it really ought not to be considered amongst thoughtful people.

And so it is incredible, my friends. If we are called upon to believe that God Almighty, for some caprice, for some reason that no one of us can understand, suddenly violated the whole course and order of his universe, and lifted up out of the sepulchre a dead man, and set him on his feet again, I believe it no more than you do. But when I turn to these words of Jesus, I find that what we are apt to call the miracle disappears; or, at any rate, the miracle is not to be found in the story of Easter, but in the long journeys through Galilee and the birth at Bethlehem.

Given that seed, and that result is automatic; there is nothing miraculous about it. Given that life, and the perpetually surrounding power and love of God acting upon that life, being reacted back upon by that life, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ is no miracle. It was automatic; it was inevitable. Why, the miracle, the wonder, the monstrous abortion, would have been that that seed, that life, which all humanity had been thirsting and hungering to see and feed upon, — that that life should have rotted, soul and body, outside the walls of Jerusalem. That would be the mystery.

Look back for one moment again at nature. Think

of the great number of seeds, my friends, that have fallen into the earth and perished, — that never have made a sign of putting forth blade, or ear, or the full corn in the ear. The great multitude that has perished! Supposing any one had lived upon this planet before the glories with which we deck our church to-day had been evolved, and had said, The day will come when the perfect seed will be planted in the earth, and apparently die; but because of its infinite potentiality, because of its perfection, including within itself all that which the dying seeds have striven for and failed to attain, that seed, being acted upon by the ever-present power of the earth, will live, and put forth a finger above the earth, and reach up an arm that at last will hold the glory of the fruit in the presence of the sun. Would it not have seemed incredible that any such thing should come to pass? Yet every flower in this church, every glory with which your house is decked to-day, every blossom that you lay upon the grave of your little child, is the fulfilment of the prophecy of nature, that the day would come when the seeds would die, and yet live; not by miracle, but naturally and inevitably, because they had within themselves that which the dying seeds had not, — the power of life.

That is the story of Jesus Christ. That a man walked this earth who heard the voice that every hu-

man being had heard from the beginning, — "My son, give me thine heart," — and he gave it to God, — gave it as you and I have never dreamed of giving. When he was a little child, when he walked the hills of Galilee, when he went into the temple at Jerusalem, when he lay down in the garden, sweating there in the agony that preceded his death, when he was nailed upon the cross, in death itself, he answered the voice of God that had been heard in every human heart and never perfectly responded to before, — "My son, give me thine heart." "My Father, I give thee my heart."

He was the only man that ever walked this earth that was filled with love for God and man. You and I have known moments when God seemed very near to us, when we were filled with the joy of God, when all things temporal seemed as naught, when to serve our fellow men seemed to us the best thing possible in the world. But that was the experience of Jesus Christ day by day; the love of God was in him all the time. He heard the voice that we all have heard, saying, "Hope maketh not ashamed; endure all that comes; there are better things prepared for you." And for the joy that was set before him he endured the cross, despising the shame, believing that he would be set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

He heard the voice that we all have heard, saying,

"My commandment is eternal life." You and I have only here and there answered to the meaning of that word, but Jesus answered perfectly. Faith and love and joy and hope and obedience, the things that you and I strive after fitfully from time to time, were all of them exemplified in every word and thought and deed of Jesus's life.

Here was a seed the like of which the world had never seen before, the mystery of which can no more be explained than the mystery that lies hidden in the embryo from which the tree, in good time, shall wave.

That is the story of Easter day: that this trust, this love, this joy, this hope in God, were justified. He lay down his life for us, saying with his last breath, I will see you again, and your heart will rejoice with that joy that no man can take from you. The story of Easter is that the faith and hope and love of Jesus Christ were justified by the resurrection from the dead.

And if you ask me what that means, I cannot tell you; and no man can tell you what it means. Only this: that on that Sunday those men that had laid that broken body away knew, as well as you and I know that we see one another, that the presence that was amongst them was the presence of Jesus Christ.

The earth bringeth forth fruit of itself. Given the perfect human seed, given the Divine presence, never

failing human love, Divine love, human trust, Divine strength, human hope, Divine joy, acting, reacting, one upon another, the result will be eternal life, inevitably.

And if you ask, How is it, then, that we do not see those now who have gone away? I know not what to answer you, for I would not deceive you with trying to pretend I know more than I am ready to say in the church of God, ready to say to the face of every one of you. But this, my friends, we must admit: that there have been men and women not a few who have believed that across the river they have seen strange shadows move, and that a voice has come to them out of the mystery, and a presence has nerved their arm to mightier labor, and lifted up their hearts in better love.

I know not. I do not dogmatize. But if I am asked why that is not a common experience, for myself I answer this: that I believe the reason is that those we love have not yet risen into that perfect life which God is leading them to more and more in that other world, as he led them more and more in this.

Only one risen life has ever been seen, because only one eternal life was ever seen before death. And if those we love, or if you and I, were perfect as Jesus is perfect, we would be able to manifest ourselves after death to those who have felt the influence of

our presence, as those disciples felt the influence of the presence of Jesus Christ, not by a miracle, but naturally.

For this is the alternative: either the faith and love and joy of Jesus Christ were justified, and he is alive to-day with the Father in whom he believed and whom he served, or that life has been blotted out, soul and body. For were Jesus alive, it could not have failed that he would have shown himself in some way to the men who put their whole trust in him; and if he did not show himself to those men so as to convince them that he who had been dead yet was alive, then we have the other mystery, namely, this assembly here to-day.

That tradition has been an everlasting power from the morning that John and Peter, breathless, ran to the sepulchre and looked in and saw that the body was gone, and turned their faces and saw one amongst them like unto the Son of Man, and went forth to preach, and to die preaching, that Jesus Christ was raised again from the dead. It is no miracle. It is the natural and inevitable result of such a seed in such a soil.

What shall we do with the story? What shall the Gospel of this day be to you and me? Shall we comfort ourselves with it, saying to ourselves, Well, if it be true, then those who have passed from us have

gone into the eternal life, and have joy and peace to-day with God?

Yes; say that to yourselves to begin with. Let that thought take possession of you, so that you know to-day that they are alive, in peace and joy, filled with a larger hope, going on from strength to strength, satisfied with what God has brought to them. Let that thought take possession of you, but do not stop there.

This call of Easter day, my friends, is the call to every one of us from the unnatural life that we are living to the natural life that Jesus revealed. The unnatural life is the life of fear, is the life of contempt, of scorn, — uncharitable, lustful, mean. But the natural life, the life that Jesus lived, is the life of trust, of love, of peace, of joy, of labor, of eternal hope.

It is a call to every one of us to the eternal life. That eternal life is natural, and they who lead the natural life of Jesus Christ shall know the power of the endless life. Each one of you, my friends, each one of you, who must surely lay down his life and be put in the dust, — each one of you may find the truth of the meaning of the word of Jesus. "The earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear."

O, if God, through his power pressing upon your life, through his love flowing into you, through his

joy that surrounds you, through his hope that is lifted before you, now, on this Easter day, will lift any one of you from the unnatural life to the natural life of Jesus Christ, I tell you that you, like those two disciples of whom we have read, will go away unto your own homes knowing the power of the resurrection.

Cast away to-day your sin. Break away to-day from your old habit. Put your whole trust and love upon God, and strive to live the life of Jesus Christ; and that which to-day is only the blade in most of you, which in some of you is the ear, will, in God's good time, in all of us, in the everlasting harvest of the eternal life, be, to his glory, the full corn in the ear.

O, may God bless and fill you with his peace, and with his joy, and with his love; for if you have that the things of time are as nothing at all; you are walking as those who are redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ, and justified by his resurrection.

XIII.

THE NEW BIRTH.

Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? — St. John, iii. 4.

IT was my privilege to speak to you last Sunday of the words which precede our text. We saw that our Lord said that no man could see the kingdom of God unless he was born again, and the question that arose in Nicodemus's mind I think arises in our minds: How is this new birth, this birth from above, to take place? Nicodemus says, It seems as impossible as physical re-birth. When a man is old, his character is supposed to be fixed. Now how can that man change his character when it has once become fixed, when he is old?

Of course the question assumes a position that Jesus would have been far from admitting. It assumes that there comes a time in a man's life when his character is fixed, when it is impossible for him to change. But that is to deny that man is a child of God; for it assumes that a time comes when man loses the power of turning to God, or that the power

of God exhausts itself, and that is to deny that God is the Eternal Father of mankind.

Jesus answered the question, not by argument, but by reference to history. He seemed to have been surprised that such a question should have come from the lips of one of the masters of Israel. He said, "Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?" The necessity for new birth, the possibility of new birth even when a man is old, — the whole history of Israel testifies to this thing.

There was Abraham who was no longer a youth, who was the possessor of much that men labor all their lives to acquire; but he walked out under the stars at night, and felt that the stars did not govern the destiny of man. He heard a voice saying, Come out of this old life and I will reveal myself to you. And he believed God, and went out, born again when he was old.

Jacob's life was a still more forcible illustration of it. A man who began with a twist in his character, a man who began life all wrong, who was the manifestation of everything that is hateful in the child life, — cunning, lying, deceit, selfishness, — was changed; and that too when he was old, when he had become a father, when he had gathered herds and multitudes about him, people dependent upon him, and had become a great chief in the land in which he was. That man, touched by the finger of God, was born

anew, having revealed to him at once his own impotence and the everlasting power of God.

Moses, the violent man, the man that supposed that the wrath of man works the righteousness of God, was born again. When he was old, there appeared to him one who showed to him the sanctity of life, and called him to go in the name of the Eternal and bring forth the people out of Egypt.

Saul was born anew. It became a proverb, "Is Saul also among the prophets?" He saw the meaning of the kingdom of God, and for a while he entered into it.

Amos was born anew. A farmer, a man whose life's purpose seemed fulfilled when he had finished his appointed task, gathered the figs, carried them to the market, and sold them. It seemed as if there was nothing more for that man to do. But the spirit of God came upon him, and he became a great prophet to Israel.

Now Jesus looks into the face of this teacher of Israel, and says, "Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?"

Those are the lives that are recorded, but what are they compared with the multitude of lives that are not recorded? the men and the women who had begun wrong and become right? the men and the women that had grown to be old, in selfishness, in indifference, in sin, and yet were renewed by the

power of God and became new creatures? Ay, Nicodemus in his own experience must have known men and women who had begun life wrong who now were servants of Jehovah.

Jesus does not argue with him. He simply refers him to history. He simply calls his attention to his own experience. How is it that thou dost not know these things?

Is it necessary to say more? The whole history of the Christian Church bears witness to this same fact. It is not necessary to enumerate them. Paul and Augustine come into the minds of all us. Bunyan and Wesley are there too. Men and women that you and I have known have been born anew when they were old, when it seemed to them and seemed to others that their character was fixed.

But there is another question implied in the words of Nicodemus. Supposing the possibility, what is the process of the new birth? How are we to think about it?

There are two ways in which men may think about it. One is to suppose that it is entirely dependent upon themselves, — that when they see fit they can change themselves and become different men. I do not think there are many who think that, but there are some. There are others, and they form an immense majority of the people who think about this

subject at all, who are under the impression that it is a thing that a man has got nothing to do with; that when the Divine Spirit sees fit to speak to a man, then the man will and must respond, but that he is as impotent to draw down the Spirit of God to brood upon his soul and quicken it as is the seed in the ground to dissipate the clouds and cause the sun to strike down beneath the earth and quicken it. How such an opinion has arisen it is not necessary for us to discuss. The important thing is to call our attention to it, that if possible we may banish it from our minds.

Jesus said, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Now what does that mean? Water and the Spirit; the lower and the higher; the human and the divine; the co-operation of these two essential elements in life, water and air; — unless these two combine, man cannot be born again, his character cannot be changed. But lest Nicodemus should become confused about this matter, he went on to say: "You hear the wind blowing; you cannot tell whence it comes, you cannot tell where it is going. That is the way of every one that is born of the Spirit." That is to say, the Divine power and influence are working all the time upon humanity. There never is a moment when the wind is not breathing over some part of this universe; there never is a moment when that outgoing of God's

life which we call the Holy Spirit is not breathing upon humanity.

Does a man ask how the new birth is produced? It is by the co-operation of the human and the Divine. This parable has been fixed by the Church, by Christ himself, in the symbol of baptism. The water is the human element, and that which it symbolizes is the human power of purification. That, put in the technical language of theology, is called repentance. Repentance! What does it mean? It does not mean weeping, tearing the hair, rending the clothes. It does not mean looking back over the past life and lamenting all that has gone before. It is not in the power of some men so to look back upon their lives; it is not in the power of some of us to weep; I think the word is an unfortunate one. The Greek word would have shown us at once what Jesus meant: *μετάνοια* means to change your mind.

Now the man that changes his mind purifies himself. He turns away from the old thing that has had dominion over him, and turns to the new, to which he now desires to devote himself. It is inevitable that in such a moment there shall come into a man's mind a disgust for the past life, — the life of selfishness, the life of low ideals, the life of contentment with self and with selfish surroundings. There will come a disgust in the man's soul, and he will say, Is it possible that I was made for this, that this is the end

and object of my life? — to go down town every morning and back again at night, to see more beautiful things year by year in my house, to gather my books about me, to learn a little more, to make myself more comfortable? Is it possible that this is the last expression of life, the outcome of all the Divine power that has been moving in the universe since the fiery clouds first filled the firmament? Is this the outcome of it? An animal, comfortable, respecting himself, respected of his fellow men? Is this the end? Is there no higher term of existence?

My friends, when a man looks back over his life and knows that if he has not reached the limit of his powers, and is horrified that this should be the end, then that man begins to repent, that man changes his mind, that man sets himself to reach a nobler and a better ideal. Repentance means, in the simple words of the Catechism that we teach the children, when we ask them what is required of those who come to be baptized, "Repentance whereby we forsake sin." The human element in the new birth is repentance; the human element is the changing of the mind, the setting of a new and better ideal before one's self with the intention of realizing it.

Now, of course, by itself we may say that is useless. But with it goes the Divine, — the Divine co-operating with the human, the consciousness of pardon, the assurance of peace, the revelation of love, the manifes-

tation of the glory of God, the meaning of the new life that was manifested and fulfilled in Jesus Christ. That is God's part of it.

Do you ask me whether God fails? I might answer, as Jesus did to Nicodemus, the history of the Church will reply to that. Have you ever known a man to repent, have you ever known a man determined to go home to his father, whom you did not see the father coming out to meet? We have never known such a case. Ay, in our own experience we have never at any particular moment of our lives repented of any harsh word, unworthy deed, or foul thought that the Spirit of God did not enter through the doorway that we had burst open in our effort to escape from the prison-house of sin. It is so all through life.

How are we to discuss it? Is the new birth divine, or is it human? The ship lies by the wharf, the sails are on the deck. It is a lifeless mass of wood or iron. The breeze ripples the waters of the harbor. Now, then, what shall change the ship into a living thing, — the sails or the wind? Which causes the ship to go? What a foolish question! The sails are hoisted, the winds play upon them, and the thing that a moment ago seemed dead is now alive, speeding to the harbor that the master intends it to reach.

Is it the sap in the tree or the sun in the heavens that causes the fruit to ripen? What a foolish ques-

tion! It is the kissing of the bud by the sun, and the rising of sap within it, that causes the luscious fruit to ripen.

Is it man or God that is the cause of man's salvation? What a foolish question! There are moments when we say, "We have done that which we ought not to have done." That means we have done that which we knew we had the power not to do. That is the assertion of man's inherent strength. And almost in the same breath we cry, "We have no health in us," we have no salvation within ourselves. There is the confession of human weakness. It is the water and the Spirit. It is the combination of the Divine and the human that causes the new character to appear and enter into the kingdom of heaven.

I say, that has been fixed in the symbol of Christian baptism. And what does that mean? It means, my friends, that the door of entrance to the Christian Church is the symbol of that which is the very Gospel of the Christian Church. The incarnation of Jesus Christ is the manifestation of the oneness between man and God. It ought to destroy forever that dualism that exists in so many men's minds, and perplexes them in regard to their position and in regard to God's work upon them. Man and God, the incarnation has revealed, are one; and every human

being, because he is a son of man, is potentially a son of God.

It seems to some of you as if this meant nothing. It means everything. We walk in the early summer; we walk through the highways and by the hedges in the country, and the children pick a little flower, so small and insignificant that it seems hardly worth their while to gather it. And they bring it to the father, and say, Father, what is the name of this little, insignificant flower? And he says, It is a rose. And they say, O no; it is not a rose, it is not a rose at all. What shall we call it? You may call it the blossom of the blackberry, if you will, but why not name it by its highest name? Why not claim this wild thing of the fields, and say, It is the sister of the glory of your garden at home, — it is essentially a rose? It has to go through many a transformation, it has to improve, it has to be cultivated, and made stronger, and nobler, and better. Then the perfume will be more satisfying. Then the color will flash out from it, as it seems to realize that it belongs and is akin to the queen of all the flowers.

So we say to man, You are a son of God. And he says, I am not a son of God; I am a sinner, I am careless, I am indifferent; I am not a son of God. We say to that man, My friend, you are a son of God, and the glory of your life begins on the day when

you recognize yourself as the son of God, and by the water of repentance and by the illumination of the Spirit are born into the consciousness of what you are.

I said to you last Sunday, We have all been born once as men, as intelligent beings. But the day was when there was no such thing upon this earth as a man. We have been born from the lower animals, you and I; but few of us are ever born anew into the better life which begins with the consciousness that though we are animals yet we are the sons of God. There is need of the new birth. We have been born out of the old animal life, and the struggle of life is to cast it off, and the glory of life is to enter into that higher life which begins — not ends, but begins — with the consciousness that we are the sons of the living God.

Now in all this, my friends, these two elements are at work all the time, — the human and the divine. There is no part of life in which the higher is not touching the lower, in which the lower is not quickened by the higher. So it must be in your life and mine.

And now, in closing what I have to say to you about confirmation, let me say one word; because I fear, my friends, that it is possible that in these frequent appeals to you to do that which does seem to

me to be the most essential thing in your life, namely, acknowledge yourselves as disciples of Jesus Christ and enter into the company thereof, in order that society, business, politics, the world, the family, the individual self, may be changed, — there is danger, I say of a misconception, and that is this.

We plead with you, we argue with you, we try to induce you to do what Jesus Christ commanded and asked; and there are men that actually say to themselves, Well, it seems very important that I should be brought into the Church; it seems very important to the Church that it should gain me. And they actually by means of the Gospel are hardened in their own self-sufficiency!

Yes, my friends, the Church wants you. The Church wants every human being, because God wants every human being. But it wants you that it may honor you, and glorify you, and inspire you. It does not want you to patronize God, nor to pity Jesus Christ the King. When he walked to his throne, the cross, the women wailed and lamented him. But he said, "Weep not for me; weep for yourselves and for your children."

That any man should go through life, — any man upon whom the power of God has been working since he was born to bring him to the glory and dignity and majesty that belong to him as a son of God, and miss it all, — that is indeed an awful catastrophe.

It is the tragedy of life. Not sorrow, not death, not disappointment, not failure, but not to know the love of God, and the glory of Jesus Christ, and the power of the Spirit, — that is the failure of life. There was a certain man that built his house upon the sand, and great was the fall of it. Is that to be the epitaph of you or me? I pray God not, and yet that it must be unless we found the house of our character upon the Rock.

XIV.

THE SUFFICIENCY OF EVIL.

Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.
St. Matthew, vi. 34.

SOONER or later all teachers and philosophers are brought face to face with the problem of evil, and are expected by their disciples to give some explanation of it. All of these may be divided into two. 1st. Evil is inherent in matter, and peace can only be obtained by its extinction. This was the belief of one of the best men the world has ever seen, Buddha. 2d. Evil is inherent in the mind. There is no such thing as evil. Things become evil by means of the action of men's minds. "There 's nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it so." This was the teaching of another of the best men the world has ever seen, Epictetus.

Both of these great teachers gave rules for overcoming evil. Buddha admonished to self-abnegation, the destruction of the instrument of sensibility. Epictetus taught self-control, destruction of mental activity.

Jesus enunciated no theory of evil. He recognized it as a fact to be dealt with, not to be explained. And he believed of this, as of everything else, that it could be turned to good account in the education of man's character. But there was another way in which he differed from these great teachers: he not only did not enunciate a theory of the origin of evil, but he did not believe that man alone could work out his salvation. He as well as Buddha taught that if your eye causes you to offend, you must pluck it out; he as well as Epictetus taught that no circumstances mattered to him who had the inward peace. But in both the power arose from the consciousness that the Father was with him.

It was in that spirit that he came to the consideration of this awful problem of evil. He had no sophisms to explain it away; he had no theory by which man might escape from it. Here it is, — an awful inexplicable mystery. Here is man with his affections, and hopes, and desires; and here too is sickness, and failure, and death. Over against each column of the temple of life lies the dark shadow that chills and frightens. The disciples turn to Jesus, and he says, "The evil of each day is sufficient." What does he mean? Why, he means: Do not waste life in trying to evolve a theory of the origin of this mystery. But rise rather to the thought of God your father, and recognize that he governs, — that he lets no more evil

into your life than he knows is good for it. Each day has sufficient. Life being what it is, if there were none you could not be educated by faith, if there were too much your life would be crushed. However evil arose, God governs it.

How? By divisions of time. Our life is divided, like a ship, into compartments. Though one be flooded, the others remain free. But for that no life could grow to virtue. But by means of this the life is protected. Each division has its allotted evil, but not the evil of another. Infancy has indeed its helplessness, but nothing more. And with its helplessness goes constant care. Childhood chafes under its appointed tasks, but knows nothing of the burden of responsibility. Early manhood is heated with passion, but does not feel the chill of avarice. Maturity walks slow under the burden of responsibility, but its steps are guided by clear judgment. Old age knows much of partings, but also the evening calm free from the burning heat of ambition.

Thus our life is guarded. God made us to endure our share of evil, and apportioned that evil so that it might do good. But what life would that be which anticipated the evil of its age, — the infant on whom tasks were laid, the child who burned with passion, the youth on whom fell all the burden of life at once, the man whose burden had to be

borne with the infirmities of old age and the fever of ambition?

That which observation teaches of the larger divisions of time Jesus is trying to teach us of the smaller. Sufficient for each day, he says, is its own evil. Here too the evil is controlled by God's wise laws. In the natural order of things only a certain number of events can come into a given time. Then follows sleep, and again we have to meet the events which come marching out of eternity toward us. Not only so. Not only is the number limited, but the possibility of their reception is limited too. Only a certain amount of sensibility is possible in a given time. When the messenger announced to Job the theft of his asses and oxen, he doubtless felt a keen pang of indignation, and when he learned of the destruction of his servants there was some sort of appreciation of the evil; but when that last breathless messenger arrived, crying out that all his children had perished, there was no full appreciation of all it meant; he bowed his head and worshipped. Later, as day by day he looked and they never came, the iron entered into his soul and wrung from him the bitter cry, "Let the day perish wherein I was born!" No man could live but for that merciful law which hides from him the full meaning of his sorrow, and only lets in day by day a little more of its intensity as God knows he is able to bear it.

It is this that Jesus is trying to teach us. Learn, he seems to say, — learn, not only that God sends the good things. This he does that you may learn to trust him. But also that he controls the evil. Do not loose yourself from that control, rather devote your energy to using it as God intends. I believe there is no one lesson more essential for us to learn. Until we learn it in part at least, there can be no marked spiritual progress. Of the life of each one of us is not this some sort of analysis?

There is the daily burden. It has its perplexities, its trials, its intermingling with others' lives. It is evident that it needs quiet, sweet temper, wise judgment, and above all great consideration for others. Even with all these essentials, few people are so constituted as to be able to do the daily tasks and bear the daily trials without a loss of what we call vitality. But how seldom we appreciate the seriousness of each day's life; and so, instead of using all our energy to make the most of the present, we lose some of it by necessary friction, more in anticipating and trying to provide against coming trouble, until we become irritable and overbearing, — and then what? Some day some overwhelming calamity comes; our strength has been wasted; the anticipated problems have all been changed by this of which we never dreamed; then with the new sorrow come new anticipations; and the sickening remorse for all the trouble caused

to others, for all the peace destroyed because the spirit chafed under the yoke of imaginary difficulties, for all the opportunities for sweet communion lost by means of the self-absorption in the past and future trials of life. Such a life cannot be long endured. No spiritual progress is possible till we learn to live each day alone, — till we rest in God's unfailing providence, — till we believe that no more than can be borne shall come any day, and that all God wants to teach us by evil is frustrated if we borrow more. Some men have no great breaches of the moral law lying heavy on their consciences; but who has not some burden of a faithless waste of energy which has caused sorrow to those we love, and loss to our own soul's health? There is no way to rise from the shadow of that remorse except by the influence of that solemn teaching of Jesus: Each day has its own task, its own burden, its own sorrow, — it may be its own agony, — but it can be borne, it can be made to yield an exceeding weight of glory, if we do not add to it. *No man is strong enough to bear what God lets come together with all that he can add.*

Opposed to this is the life of faith; — the life that goes on each day, believing that nothing can by any means come to it which God's power cannot control; asking itself less and less why things are as they are and more and more what ought to be done with them;

sure that something can be done because God is greater than all; learning that the life of Jesus is what man was made for; earnestly trying to use the awful experiences of life to develop the hidden life of the soul.

Jesus gives us two precepts to help us in this work. The first is the consideration of nature. "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow." The calm, unceasing, unconscious activity of nature, — think what stupendous results it produces. Yet there is no hurry, no anxiety, no striving after effect, — nothing but the simple appropriation of that which each day brings. The flowers which bare their bosom to the sun in June do not ask how they will be kept from freezing in December. The tree that loses its blossoms in May does not force back the rising sap by fear of the awful blasts of winter. And what is the result? Night and day, summer and winter, seed-time and harvest, never fail. And what is more, it is only through that impotence of nature that man exists upon this earth. Nature exists for the higher life, which has a power of which she knows nothing. Could Nature worry, could Nature change her spring to winter by anxiety, could she add to the frost that kills so many seeds earthquake and tempest, chaos would come, and no sentient life could exist upon this planet. She cannot, and that, says Jesus, is why the lilies grow in all their beauty, and

the sun rises, and the rain falls on the evil and on the good. Yet there is evil in nature. Famine and pestilence, storm and tempest, forest fires and mountain volcanoes, earthquake in the smiling plain, flood in the unsuspecting valley. Yet the world goes on, and is being created before our eyes for better life upon it. Consider it, says Jesus, consider it till you learn that it exists for a life higher than its own, by a power not its own, and that its life and stupendous work are possible only because it cannot frustrate the work of God. "It neither toils, nor spins, nor gathers into barns," but rests, and God clothes and feeds it. Consider nature, says Jesus, and learn that the secret of its power lies in its freedom from anxiety. Jesus was not the first to teach this, nor will he be the last; and had he had nothing more to say, the gain to the world would not have been great. Many men and women are coming to feel the profound truth lying in this thought, but by dwelling on it exclusively they have missed the Gospel, — the good news. How many are feeling to-day that the unconscious life of nature is better than the fretful restlessness of man! How many are saying, When the "fitful fever" we call life has run its course, we will drink deep of the anodyne called death, and sleep forever, undisturbed by care, untroubled by dreams. This was not Jesus's thought. The unconscious power of nature rested him, but the thought of the

destiny of man inspired him. The thought of evil which will not let man rest, the pricking goad which will not leave the flesh satisfied, the earthquake which destroys the home built in such joy and love, the pestilence that turns the town into a charnel-house, Jesus felt, were all working for a purpose, to teach men that they here can have no abiding city, and so teach them to seek one to come, by submitting their souls in trust to Him who knows what he does. Nature is blest because she unconsciously obeys. Man can be blest only by conscious obedience and loving trust.

Nothing shows us the importance Jesus attaches to this more than the way in which he begs men to look at the other picture. Consider the lilies of the field, and the birds of the air. Consider their carelessness, and the marvellous results. Then turn to man. Note his fever, his anxiety, his weariness with the present, his regret for the past, his fear for the future. And how little is effected! He cannot change the past, nor hold the present, nor see the future. What a pitiful object he is! To nature an eccentricity, to philosophy a fool. But to God what? O, to God a child, loved, longed for, waited for, cared for, pitied, as only a father can pity his own children. Pitied not because the evil is so great that he cannot bear it, but pitied because to the evil which is great enough, and has a purpose, he adds evil greater

than he can endure, and which frustrates the awful, mysterious work of God.

I have spoken of this principle as if it applied only to the individual on whom evil falls. But its application is very wide. We are not only to be on our guard against adding to our own burden through anxiety, but also to beware of saddening others' lives by complaining of our own lot. Their evil, too, is great enough; let no man add to it. The Psalmist said, "When my heart is heavy, I will complain." He meant to God. St. Peter says, "Cast all your care upon God."

See then the effect it might have upon our lives if we followed the Lord's teaching. We should give up the vain effort to understand the mystery of life. It is as impossible as to discern the windings of a narrow valley among the towering mountains. If we ever reach the mountain top, the way below will be plain before our eyes.

We should endeavor to turn the events of each day to good account. We should be saying, "In what way can this experience be used so as to make me like Jesus Christ? How can I live to-day so as to be the least burden to others?"

When that had been done, we could go still farther, and enter into sympathy with the silent majesty of nature, and regard it as the perpetual witness to eter-

nal power, and the strong example to feverish, fretful, anxious man.

Would that be enough? No. Man needs love, he needs a life which believes in him, and sacrifices itself for him, and holds before him an ideal the attainment of which is possible. O for One with the majestic calm of nature and the loving heart of man! That has been the cry of many a soul. And many a soul has found the answer in Jesus Christ, — found him to be the perfectly satisfying manifestation of the mystery which, for want of a better name, we call God. And those souls have believed that every experience of life was an opportunity to come one step nearer God. May not we be like them? Jesus says, Yes; only do not take the direction of your own life; accept it as the birds do, as the lilies do. Then, when that has been done, turn to God as a son, and say, "For this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name."

Life is full of joy, life is full of sorrow. Thank God for all your joy, but beseech him to save you from adding to life's sorrow.

XV.

THE SOUL'S REFUGE.

The eternal God is thy refuge.
DEUTERONOMY, XXXIII. 27.

WE are called together to-day by the Church to consider what we know of God. Let us ask ourselves, then, first of all, how it is that we learn, how we come by the knowledge of anything. The answer will very quickly be given, namely, by experience; and experience, we shall find, arises through the consciousness of want.

For example, the child is conscious of some want, and through the avenue of the want the mother reveals herself to the child; and as the experiences of the child increase in number, and in intensity and depth, the knowledge of the mother by the child increases also. The new-born child needs warmth; it is supplied. The new-born child needs food; it is supplied. Clothing, air, speech, education through books, enlargement of the soul through companionship, the lifting up of a noble ideal through the revelation of an older, wiser, and better soul, — all these things follow in the education of the child's life.

Now, we may call the end at which the child arrives the result of discovery or revelation. But if we stop to think about the matter for a moment, we shall see that experience is made up of these two things, — discovery and revelation; in other words, that discovery and revelation are but two names for the same thing. If we look at it from the human or lower side, we call it discovery; but if we look at it from the higher or divine side, we call it revelation; because man can discover nothing that God does not reveal, and God can reveal to man nothing that man does not ultimately discover.

Now, if this be so, let us ask ourselves, What is the end of experience? In other words, Does experience end with simple sensation, or does it try to formulate itself into a given science? If we do this, we shall find that the human mind is not satisfied to rest in experience without trying to gather together others of a like nature. The mind seeks to bring its knowledge under certain heads to which it can refer the larger knowledge it is continually receiving, and at last, if possible, to resolve all into a comprehensive and yet simple formula. That is the end and object of science; and there has no experience come to humanity that humanity has not followed up by an attempt to formulate the law of its existence.

So we gain and retain our knowledge. Experience is the reaper that mows down the grain, and reason is

the binder who follows after, gathering into sheaves. Experience lays hold of some of the great facts of life and names them. Reason begins to gather up all these scattered names, and group them together under certain heads, until it finds what it calls the law of their association; and when that has been done, when the flowers, for instance, with all their various names, have been gathered up into a few typical groups and named for those groups, then we have what we call the science of botany.

I wish to apply these thoughts, which are very simple, and familiar doubtless to you all, to that which brings us here this morning, — the consideration of our knowledge of God. And I think we shall find that it follows the same law as that which our knowledge in any other department of life follows; namely, first, the name as the result of experience; and then, secondly, the formulation of those various names into given groups; and, lastly, the setting forth of an authoritative formula, which is the science of God, or, as we more frequently call it, Theology.

The question is not, as it is sometimes said, one of idle speculation, — what men have dreamed about God, — because no idle speculation could ever be subject to this law of human knowledge which works elsewhere. It is not idle speculation which has led men in different parts of the world, at different peri-

ods of the world's history, with various characteristics, to unite in agreeing upon certain formulas which express man's knowledge of God. No, it is the result of experience.

If you turn to the history of man, you will find that there are certain experiences which the human mind has undergone in its relation to nature. The record of the history of mankind begins with an impression made upon the mind of man by the presence of nature. Very often it is an experience of fear; nature seems so great, and man so little. Sometimes it is an experience of beauty; nature is so full of glory that the heart of man rejoices in its presence. Sometimes it is the thought of wisdom in the marvellous manifestation of the harmony and the apparent adjustment of nature to given ends, that has oppressed, or rejoiced, or astonished the heart of man, as the case may be. But underlying it all has been this thought, — that Nature was somehow the enemy of man, — that though she seemed beautiful, though she seemed wise, still she was the oppressor of man, and that some day she that had brought him forth would devour him, and he should pass into the nothingness from which he came. And the heart of man grew sick and faint at the thought of the destroying power of nature. And so in every age and nation men have lifted themselves up above this overpower-

ing sense of the glory, the strength, and the beauty of nature, and have claimed kinship with One who is above it all, who created it, who rules it, who knows the heart of men.

They have given different names to this Life that was above men and beyond nature, — this Creator. If the experience took place in India, they called it Brahma. If it took place in Egypt, they called it Ptah. If in Greece, it was Olympian Jove. If in Rome, it was Jupiter. If in Judea, it was Jehovah. In all these names there was the thought of One nobler, greater, more powerful than nature, whom man could propitiate, to whom he could draw near, and so be delivered from the bondage of nature. "The eternal God," it was said in every age, "is thy refuge."

Then came Jesus. And Jesus said: Call this power no longer by the ethnic national name of Brahma, Jehovah, Jove, or Jupiter, but call it by the human name, Father. Creator-Father, said Jesus, is the name to give to the Almighty Power that you have felt in the presence of nature, and to which you have desired to draw near, but to which you knew not how to draw near. Call it now what it is, your Father. And so there passed into human speech a new name for God, no longer the national name, but the catholic name, because answering to human wants wherever found. Men who have heard

the Gospel have said from the time of Jesus, "God is our Father."

Now, if that had been the only want that men had experienced, — namely, the longing for a Life greater than nature, for One who could rule and govern nature, and save them from its power, — there would never have been any further revelation of the name of God, because there would have been no want along the avenue of which man could have discovered God, or God could have revealed himself to man. But there were other wants. Man was not only in contact with nature, he was also in contact with his fellow men, and he found this society of which he formed a part filled with violence and sin, and the dream and hope of man's life was that One would appear who should be the King, who should rule men, who should make society something better than one tribe warring against another tribe; should make it a nation in which order and decency, and all things that we now call civilization, could grow and flourish. So they set up men as kings, and called them the "sons of God," because they felt that no man could be a true king who was not in some sense the representative on earth of God.

But there was another deeper thought as the individual became a power in life. As men became conscious of their own personality as distinct from the

personality of the tribe, or gens, or family, or nation of which they formed a part, there came into man's mind a desire for a King of his soul, — One who would rule not only in society and keep man from doing wrong to his fellow man, but who would rule also in his life, and prevent the conflict of which he was conscious between those two powers wrestling in his soul, one dragging him down to the beast level from which he had been raised, the other suggesting that he too belonged to God. The heart of man craved a King of the soul, that is, a Saviour.

Then came Jesus, and he declared that he came to reveal the kingdom of God. He said the kingdom of God was within men. He said that he was the King, and that any man who came to him should find peace, because the filial spirit within man's soul would respond to the filial spirit that Jesus perfectly manifested, and so responding would assert itself in man's heart and rule there, and the kingdom of God should be set up in the soul of each individual man that drew near and swore allegiance to the King of humanity. That was the promise of Jesus. He said that in the realization of that promise would come "the peace of God that passeth all understanding"; that men's sins should be cast out; that they should have the consciousness of pardon, and should know the calm that comes after the long struggle of battle. And the sinners flocked to Jesus in troops, not be-

cause they had any theological theory about the forgiveness of sins, not because they had any theory about the scheme of salvation, but simply because they saw the beauty of holiness in the face of Jesus Christ, — simply because they were convinced that that character was the manifestation of the Divine Life that they had thought or heard of from time to time, but had now for the first time seen revealed.

Jesus called himself the Son of man, the typical man, the man that reveals to humanity what mankind is; and he called himself also the Son of God, the One who reveals to humanity what God is: "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father also."

Now, after this preaching of Jesus, there was no particular theory on which the disciples were agreed as to his relation to the Father. Simply the word God had enlarged, for them, its meaning. They could no longer think of the Father without thinking of Jesus. They could not think of Jesus without thinking of the Father. Somehow they felt towards them both alike. They did not analyze their feelings, but they knew that in some way Christ had become as God to them. The heaven was not empty, the Eternal had not left his throne when Jesus was born. No such thought as that ever entered their minds. They did not know how Jesus was related to the Father, only they felt that he was to them what God was to them. If they thought of the Father, they thought

of Jesus; if they thought of Jesus, they thought of the Father.

It was something like the experience that goes on in the hearts of men to-day. A man looks into the face of his wife and says, You have all my love. And some day a child is born. He does not transfer the love of his wife to his child, he is not conscious of any change. He is only conscious that his heart has gone forth as fully to the child as it went to the mother. He has simply enlarged his conception of family. Where his whole love was given forth to one, his whole life-love is now given forth to another. The number of objects of his love has increased, his love has increased with it.

It was the same way, my friends, with the disciples. It was not that they had more gods than they had before; it was simply that the power of their devotion Godward had been increased by the revelation of Jesus Christ, so that they were able to give forth the love to Jesus and to the Father that they had heretofore given forth to the Father alone.

I suppose that represents the experience of the Church for thirty years after the ascension of Jesus Christ.

There was also a third experience that was going on in the hearts of men, to which we must now refer, and that was a suspicion that they were themselves in

some way allied to God, a suspicion that Jesus did himself confirm, for in revealing to them himself as the Son of God, he revealed them to themselves as the children of God. He declared that all men were the children of God, — in other words, that all men were a part of the Divine life. And the question instantly arose through that experience, What relation then does God bear to the individual, and in what sense is the individual a part of God? We have come to learn, men might have said, that the name of God means far more than we used to think it meant. We have come to learn that it means the Father of our souls, in whom we find peace. We have come to learn that it means the Perfect Man, Christ Jesus, who has saved us from our sins. Does it mean more than this? If not, then this is the position we are in. Mankind is far away from God, and therefore we must, by some power of our own, single ourselves out from the common humanity to which we belong, and draw near to Jesus Christ. Is this the meaning of life? Jesus told them it was not the meaning of life, that when he had gone away from them, when he had withdrawn his physical presence from them, God would be nearer to them than he had ever been before, which they found fulfilled after the ascension.

Whatever the story may mean of the descent of the Spirit, these men felt, as they never had felt before, their love for God, their nearness to Jesus; they

could think of nothing else, and in them awoke a belief that they were but a spark of that Life which had been perfected and revealed in Jesus, and that God was somehow dwelling in them to flame that spark, that it might become united, and yet not be absorbed in the Eternal Life which had created all things, and had been revealed in Jesus Christ.

So men found that their thought of God had enlarged again. It meant the Creator; it meant the Saviour; it meant the Spirit that spoke to them through conscience, and revealed to them duty, that lifted up before them the glory of hope, that was beside them in the hour of despondency, that cheered them on to the battle, when the voices of the senses seemed with their clamor to drown the still, small voice of God.

Now, my friends, these experiences are just as real as walking upon the earth, or gazing upon the stars, or taking hold of the hand of our fellow men. They are experiences of which some men have been more vividly conscious than others, but of which all men have in some sort known the meaning.

Now, then, that being so, is it possible to have a science of this? Is it possible to draw these varied experiences together and give to them a name? If so, we have the science of the experience by man of God. It is exactly that which the Church undertook to do.

She did not do it at once. There is almost none of it in the Synoptic Gospels, though when you have once got the key you find it there. There is very little of it until perhaps thirty years after the ascension of Christ. And if you know your New Testament, — not as a Koran, in which every word has an equal value, but as the literature of the Church, — if you know when these different documents that form our New Testament were written, you can trace, to use a modern scientific term, the evolution of this formula just as clearly as you can trace the evolution of any physical science through the literature of the scientific age which preceded it.

In the Epistles to the Colossians and to the Philippians St. Paul begins to try to formulate the meaning of the relation of Jesus Christ to the Father, and it goes on until we come to the Gospel of St. John, where the life revealed in Jesus Christ is identified with the Eternal Logos, the Reason of God, the human side of God, that was not made when Jesus was made, but existed from all eternity; for there never was a time when God did not have within him the potentiality of humanity, and that potentiality became actual in Jesus Christ. This was denied, not because it was in conflict with reason, but because it was in conflict with Oriental theories of matter and spirit.

And so one writer after another tried to formulate

the science of the relation of man to God; and it was not completed until the Council of Nicæa in the year 325, when was put forth the creed, afterwards modified by the Council of Constantinople, which the Church directs us to use, especially on Trinity Sunday. An attempt was made then to formulate the experience of a human soul in contact with God. This was put forth with authority; it was accepted with authority, too, — the authority of reason.[1] But neither in the creed of Nicæa, nor in the so called Apostle's Creed, nor in the Bible, is there one word about three persons and one God, or one person and three Gods. That was a later addition; and I venture to say that the whole difficulty that arises in the minds of thoughtful people about the doctrine of the Trinity, and that which gives a handle to the vain scoffers who speak about that which has been the very refuge of the human soul in all these Christian ages as if it were a contradiction that any child who knew how to subtract and add could rectify, — I venture to say that all these difficulties have resulted from the introduction of certain philosophical terms which have no place here.

The last addition in the attempt to formulate the Christian science of the relation of man to God is found in the First Epistle of St. John, where we

[1] "Servatur ubique Jus Romanum non ratione imperii sed rationis imperio." Laferriere, quoted in Lowell's "Eve of the French Revolution."

read: "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one." That is no part of the Bible. It never was written by St. John. It was not written until after the Nicæan Council. It was put into the Bible as the expression of the Church's belief in regard to God. I believe it to be true; but it is no part of the Bible, and it confuses and troubles us when we find the last term of the evolution introduced at the very beginning of the process.

There are two theories in regard to the being of God. No man is prepared to say which of them is the more nearly correct. The word "person" is used now in a very different sense from that in which it was used when the creed was formulated, — so different as almost to be a contradiction in terms. The word "person" now means to the ordinary mind an individual, such as John, James, Peter; but it meant nothing of the sort originally. It comes, as you know, from the Latin *persona*, and means a "mask," a "face," which is a manifestation of some particular phase of the life. What was said was that in the Divine Life there are these three faces, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and that these three are one God.

It is practical, this faith, because it is the result of experience; and if it were not that it would have no meaning for us.

"The eternal God is thy refuge." There is but one God; the human soul need not seek first one, and then another, and then a third, in order to propitiate in some way one who is opposed to the others. Not that, — there is but one God in whom the human soul may find rest.

But the experiences of the human soul may be summed up in these three: the want of a Creator, who is with man as against the apparent enmity of nature, and to that One we draw near, and behold, God has to us the face of the Father. And the Creed says that the peace that comes into your soul when you identify yourself with the Father-Creator is the peace of God; because that Father is God, you have identified yourself with God.

In the hour of sin, in the discord of life, when we begin to doubt God's love, when we long for One to whom we can draw near and confess our sin, as we can confess it only to One who has entered into our experience and known temptation, who has borne sorrow and yet loved and trusted God through all, — when we draw near to that One we see the face of Jesus Christ, the Eternal Son, and the Creed says, It is God. You have drawn near to God. God, whom you knew a minute ago as your Creator, you now know as your Saviour.

Sin rises up within me and says, Why try to live the ideal life? Why not give up and turn from

sacrifice to self? Why not eat and drink, for to-morrow we die? Why not seek the prizes of life, instead of being a servant? And the Spirit says within me, "The eternal God is thy refuge." You are part of Jesus Christ because of the oneness of your nature with his; you are part of the Eternal God, and can draw near to the Father as a son. The glory, the beauty, the splendor of your life is found in God. And the Creed says: That is the voice of God; you have seen a new face of God,— the face of God that is within your poor, troubled, sinful soul, shining more and more unto the perfect day.

That is the Creed. One God,— Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,— Creator, Saviour, Sanctifier. That is the formula of the experience of humanity thus far in the conflict against sin, and in the attempt to realize itself in God. It is no vain dream of philosophers. It is no contradiction of schoolboys. It is that which saints on earth and the redeemed above have found to be the refuge of the human soul.

XVI.

THE ARROW OF THE LORD'S DELIVERANCE.

Now Elisha was fallen sick of his sickness whereof he died. And Joash the king of Israel came down unto him, and wept over his face, and said, O my father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof. And Elisha said unto him, Take bow and arrows. And he took unto him bow and arrows. And he said to the king of Israel, Put thine hand upon the bow. And he put his hand upon it: and Elisha put his hands upon the king's hands. And he said, Open the window eastward. And he opened it. Then Elisha said, Shoot. And he shot. And he said, The arrow of the Lord's deliverance, and the arrow of deliverance from Syria: for thou shalt smite the Syrians in Aphek, till thou have consumed them. And he said, Take the arrows. And he took them. And he said unto the king of Israel, Smite upon the ground. And he smote thrice, and stayed. And the man of God was wroth with him, and said, Thou shouldest have smitten five or six times; then hadst thou smitten Syria till thou hadst consumed it: whereas now thou shalt smite Syria but thrice. — 2 Kings, xiii. 14–19.

THIS is the last scene in the historical drama of Elisha; the words which precede this passage give us very briefly the history of Joash the

king. We learn from this and from other parts of the Bible that this king was a brave general and an able ruler, but that his life was a failure. He wasted his energies in fighting against Judah, and simply held the Syrians at bay on the eastern frontier of Israel. And so, after we are told in this book of the burial of Joash, we have this story put in, which takes us back to the beginning of the reign of the young king, and we see him in all the freshness and vigor of his youth. He hears that Elisha, the man of God, is fallen sick of his sickness whereof he died; and with a generous impulse the king leaves his palace and goes down to the house of the prophet, and enters into his bedchamber. And when he sees the great prophet stretched helpless on the bed from which he should never rise to walk again, there seems to have flooded his soul the memory of all this one man had done, — how he had been at once poet and counsellor and statesman and leader. He thought of the reign that was opening before him; he thought of his own helplessness; and, in the words that Elisha had used when Elijah was rapt away from his sight, he cried: "O my father, my father, thou art the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof."

The old prophet roused himself and looked into the face of the young king; and perhaps there came into his heart the hope that now, at last, a worthy son of David was come to reign, and he tries him.

He tells him to take the bow and arrows, which he does; and the prophet, lifting himself up, lays his feeble hand on the strong hand of the young king, and through the open window that looked eastward toward their great enemy, Syria and Damascus, he tells the king to shoot the arrow, which he does. And then the prophet, full of divine enthusiasm, calls out, "It is the arrow of the Lord's deliverance!" and says to the king, "Take the arrows, take all of them, smite upon the ground." And the king takes them, and smites three times, and stays.

The prophet falls back. O if thou hadst smitten five or six times, if thou hadst been filled with a divine enthusiasm for God's work, Syria should have been destroyed! Now, you shall go down into your grave with only half the victory won. That was the secret of the failure of Joash, king of Israel.

How the spiritual drama repeats itself year after year! Again and again we see young people come up full of enthusiasm, full of the memory of the great things that noble lives have done, lamenting the glory that has departed from the earth, feeling a sudden impulse, which like an arrow is shot forth from the soul, essaying to do some great and noble work; and in that moment the prophetic voice is heard saying, The arrow of the Lord's deliverance; there lies the work of your life. This sudden im-

pulse that takes possession of you in your youth, and causes you to shoot forth the arrows of the aspirations of your soul, — these are the things, my friends, that show you the way of the Lord. It is God's purpose that you should be the deliverer of his people in the particular path that he has opened before you.

How that is going on every day! How every day at college men are lifting up their hearts, and setting open the windows of their souls, and looking out, shooting forth the thoughts and hopes and desires of their soul into this great unknown world! And the prophetic voice says to them, This way, in the path of sober judgment, in the path of splendid management, in the path of noble eloquence, in the path of self-denial for the service of man, there is the arrow of the Lord's deliverance; there is the path that is opening out before you for a noble, splendid, self-denying, useful, effective life.

How many have heard that! How many are hearing it this very Sunday morning, sitting in the silence of their own chambers, and dreaming of the mystery, and the splendor, and the opportunity of life!

And then what? Then says the prophetic voice again, Smite upon the ground. Take these arrows and bind them together, and in a divine frenzy devote yourself, soul and body, to the work that God has revealed to you to do. Then comes the critical moment in a man's life. He smites thrice, and

stays. He says to himself, I need not do my best; I can do about as well as other men and not be wearied by my work; I have gifts that will enable me to live, and enable me to attain, perchance, a fortune, and yet I need not give up the things that make life pleasant; I need not turn aside from my self-indulgence; I will smite thrice, and stay.

So it comes to pass that this great multitude, surging out into the life of the world year after year, equipped, crowned as kings for the work of life, smite the Syrians but thrice. The work of life is but half done. They remain failures, when they might have triumphed gloriously.

Or take another illustration of the same thing. Here is a woman who has given herself up to a life of frivolity and vanity. Perhaps she is not to blame for that; perhaps she has had no ideal of noble things set before her. But some day the casement is thrown open, and she sees a new life before her, — a life which shall be devoted to husband and children and home, a life which shall for the first time remember the great forgotten who dwell among us. The hand of the prophet is on that woman, and her soul shoots forth the arrow of a new desire. And the voice says, It is the arrow of the Lord's deliverance; there lie the glory, and splendor, and nobility of your life; there is the path on which God would have you walk, and you may deliver yourself and

deliver those who live about you from the slavery and misery of the false ideals that thus far have dominated them. Smite, says the voice of the prophet. Devote yourself, soul and body, instantly, to the new work that has been revealed to you.

And she smites thrice. She goes to see some poor stricken soul, and she finds it tiresome; she turns aside from some gathering of frivolity, and her soul is parched. She undertakes some noble work of self-denial, and she is tired. She smites thrice, and stays, and goes down with the great multitude, worthless, useless, bringing no fruit to perfection.

Listen to one more example of the same thing. Here is a man or woman who has come on through life, and suddenly awakes to the consciousness of his ignorance of the Divine revelation in Jesus Christ. It smites upon him. Sometimes for one cause, and sometimes for another, it comes to pass that men and women living here in this city suddenly for the first time have a revelation of the glory and beauty and power of the life of Jesus Christ. And they say to themselves, Is the thing a myth? How has it come to pass that people have dreamed of such a life? How is it that men and women gather week after week, and day after day, to hear of the Lord Jesus Christ, and desire to serve him?

That man shoots forth the arrow of his desire for knowledge, and the voice says, It is the arrow of the

Lord's deliverance. There lies the path by which you shall walk into the kingdom of truth and be saved from your enemies. And he begins to read. He reads a little, and he talks a little, and he thinks a little. But he learns before long that there is opening up before him a great and tremendous work, and the scepticism of the time finds voice, and whispers, Why waste your energies to learn that which cannot be known? Devote the energy of life to something that is practical; turn aside from vain dreams.

So he, like the others, smites thrice and stays, and enters the great company of sceptics, — or, as they like to be called to-day, agnostics, — ignorant of God's eternal truth.

The fact is familiar to us all; but what I would like to do in the few moments that are left this morning is to ask you to consider with me whether there be not some explanation of this constant failure in life, in a life which began with a noble impulse, in a life which heard the inspiring voice of God speaking through the prophet, — if there be not some explanation of that failure that perhaps will point the way to better things.

I cannot but think, my friends, that it is largely due to a false conception of our own value and our own work in this world. I cannot but think that

these constant failures are due largely to a feeling that it is a matter of personal concern alone. In other words, that it is nobody's business but my own whether or not I make the most of the gifts that have been bestowed upon me; that it does not concern any one except myself whether my life be a frivolous or a helpful one; that religion is a thing between the individual soul and Almighty God, and that it is a matter of no consequence to any one except myself whether I know and acknowledge Jesus Christ as my King and Master, or whether I drift on and say I don't know.

Now Elisha, the old prophet, and all who with him have been filled with the prophetic spirit, have felt that here lay the fallacy of life. It was not a thing that concerned Joash alone whether or not he smote upon the ground five or six times. It was not a thing that concerned him alone, or concerns you and me alone, whether we devote ourselves soul and body, in the power of a divine enthusiasm, to a nobler, more glorious and splendid life, that by the mercy of God has been revealed to us. It concerns God. It concerns the kingdom of Israel, by whatever name it may be known, — whether it be the little coterie of friends that surrounds you, or whether it be the city of Boston, or the great Commonwealth, or the nation of which we form a part. All are concerned, because the aspiration of your soul, the desire of your soul,

the shooting forth of any aspiration for a nobler and a better life, is the arrow of the Lord's deliverance.

It is Almighty God that has chosen you to do this particular work, to shoot the arrow of deliverance through that particular casement, and to have as an object that particular wickedness which is oppressing his people. It is not a thing that concerns me and you alone whether or not we save our own souls. It does concern us, but that is not the whole of the truth. The whole of the truth is that Almighty God has chosen every one of you here, merchant, lawyer, physician, woman of the world, woman of society, — all, men, women, and children alike, — each one of them has been chosen by God; and the way is revealed by the shooting forth of your nature to overcome the special evil that God Almighty knew that you were capable of overcoming.

And we feel it, too. When the Divine enthusiasm takes possession of us, we feel ourselves equal to this work. And the reason we fail is that we forget that it is actually God that has called us, and that this deliverance is nothing less than the deliverance appointed by Jehovah.

Now, suppose any man or woman had that thought take possession of his soul. Do you not think, my friends, that life would be different from what it is? Suppose it came to any man in this church this

morning, that the condition of affairs in which we are now living, in our business life, was nothing less than slavery. Suppose it was revealed to him that he was the one chosen by God to do a great work in this community, in changing the ideal that has taken possession of people and enslaved them, that the end and object of life is luxury. Do you suppose, my friends, if this work had been done twenty years ago, there would be so many weary men this day saying to themselves, What shall the morrow bring forth? Men dropping dead because they cannot stand the strain. Men killing themselves because at last the main object that they have in life is removed from their eyes.

It is the life not of men: I do not say, not of children of God, — I say, not of men. It is the grasping, struggling, awful life of the beasts of the field. This love of gold, this thirst for riches, this heart-rending desire for luxury, — it has taken possession of us all; and therefore we have such days of awful care and such nights of fruitless pain.

Is there no man to whom better things are revealed? To that man there has been shown the arrow of the Lord's deliverance.

Is there no woman to whom a better vision has appeared of what our social life might be? What is it now? I will not undertake to characterize it. I would not undertake to describe it, for it is impos-

sible. I speak, indeed, only of those things which are the worst amongst us. Of course there is good, there is sweetness and light. But is not something altogether wrong when it is possible for a woman calling herself a Christian, kneeling at the table of the Lord, and saying that she desires to feed on the body and blood of Jesus Christ, and will live his life, — is there not something wrong when that woman can seek out her bosom friend and say, as the moth might say, I sailed so near the candle that my sides were hot, and yet I was not singed? I have come so near to sin that there was almost scandal, yet I am still received?

The arrow of the Lord's deliverance! Who is the woman that will shoot it forth and change the things that are?

The arrow of the Lord's deliverance! Is there not need of it in our religious life? Is there not need that we should see that the real work of life is not the crying with our lips of "Lord, Lord," but the earnest doing of the will of our Father in heaven? Is there no man whose soul can open and see the enemy that besets the Church, and, feeling the divine influence shoot out the impulse of his life against it, devoting himself to the redemption of Israel?

Ah, if it were done! If that one thought of which I have been speaking, which I find wrapped up in

this old story of the King Joash and the Prophet Elisha, could take possession of this congregation this morning, the world would be a different thing.

How do I know? Because, as I look back over history and note what life has been, — when, as Browning says,

> "I look to the end of work, contrast
> The petty done with the undone vast,
> This our present with our hopeful past," —

I know that I have failed. But I know I need not have failed; I know that God has never inspired a man to do a work which he did not give him the power to accomplish. Yet in all history there has been but One who, shooting out the arrow of his soul, smote upon the ground with all the energy of his being and delivered Israel.

There was another, a young man too, on whom the hand of the prophet was laid, and he went up into the wilderness and climbed the mountain, and shot forth the full expression of his life, and he saw the arrow fall, and it fell on Calvary. And he heard the voice, It is the arrow of the Lord's deliverance. And he said, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. And by that you and I are saved.

The arrow of the Lord's deliverance. I have tried to illustrate it in this way and that, by referring to the different experiences and energies of our nature.

Gather it up in one final word, The arrow of the Lord's deliverance is human life. Each soul that comes into this world is shot forth by the Divine impulse, and passes through darkness and sorrow, and sickness and weariness and pain; but it speeds on its way, and may reach that which God aimed it at if it hear through all the journey and through all the mystery, Thou art the arrow of the Lord's deliverance. You were born that some work might be done, some evil overcome, that no other soul in all time could do.

And if, my friends, we and our children fail to co-operate with God, the work of God fails. But if we lift up our hearts and thank Him, not oppressed by the burden and responsibility, but glorified, inspired, and ennobled by the remembrance of what it means to be the arrow of the Lord's deliverance, then life will be strong and brave, and full of glory and full of joy.

May God save you, save us, from failure. May God enable us, when the Divine voice speaks, to give ourselves, soul and body, to His glorious work!

XVII.

THE POWER OF THE OBVIOUS.

Ye look at the things that are before your face.
2 CORINTHIANS, X. 7.

ST. PAUL was speaking of the failure of the Corinthians to appreciate what he had been to them, and tells them that this failure was due to their habit of seeing only the things that were before their face. When they looked on him, they saw what some one has coarsely but truly called a blear-eyed little Jew; they failed to see a soul which had been made noble and beautiful by communion with its Lord.

The fact itself is a very common one; the failure of the short-sighted men, who judge according to the outward appearance, to recognize the prince in disguise, has long been a favorite subject with the satirist; and if it only led to the confusion which is sure to follow when the prince reveals himself, one might laugh again, as we used to do at the discomfiture of those who in the fairy tales failed to see what we saw.

But indeed this failure is no subject for the pen

of the satirist, it is no comedy, when it enters into the deeper concerns of life, — it is a tragedy. I ask you to consider with me, then, some examples of the *power of the obvious* on the lives of men.

First, in what it does in the matter of self-indulgence.

When the results of physical indulgence are obvious, it needs no orator to make men tremble in speaking of temperance and judgment to come. It is so evident to the poor wretch trembling on the brink of paralysis, or scared by imaginary dangers, that he must stop in his downward career, that it is easy to get from him a maudlin promise of a new life. He sees the things which are before his face.

But what are we to say to another man who is self-indulgent?

We may warn him of the consequences which must follow from sowing to the flesh; but the only consequences he regards are physical, and they do not seem alarming. There are men who are temperate in their intemperance. They do not get drunk; they only stimulate a little. That is, they draw every day upon their capital. Were we to tell them so, they would smile good-naturedly, and say, "Better to burn out than to rust out." Why should I wish to live to be eighty, — "sans eyes, sans teeth, sans everything"? I harm no one; I am as well as most men;

I am an indulgent father and a thoughtful husband. Suppose my voice is a little thick as I walk home before dinner, who is the worse for it? Am I not polite to those I meet? What do you wish? I am warm and comfortable, and full of kindly thoughts. I took a nip at the bar, or a cocktail at the club, — well, what of it?

What shall we say to them? What Paul said to the Corinthians: "Ye look at the things that are before your face." You are sleek and comfortable, sound and kind perhaps, as we say of a horse. If what is seen is all there is to you, you may be right, and those who dream of the spirit may be mad. While we look at the things that are before the face, there is nothing to be said of these men. They shall not lie in a drunkard's grave; they are strong and well. *But* — and here is the tragedy — *they have their reward!* This is all they can expect. There is no eternity for the physical man, there is no progress. They catch no glimpse of what life might be. They believe that a voice was heard on Jordan saying, "Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased"; but they never dream that that same approving voice can be heard under the Common trees, or in the Garden walks, or on the streets that lead them home.

O my friend, while you look at the things that are before your face, I cannot help you, — you have the best of the argument. Easy good nature, a daily

increase of the animal life, the dulling of the ear and eye, — that is what comes from feeding the appetite on what is before the face. Why is it sad? It is because the animal life is but the shadow of that true life which even now these men of whom I speak might know, — a life of progress, which can no more be content to walk forever on the same low level than the lark can be content to plod on the dusty road when the open sky calls it to sail among the island clouds and be inspired by its purer air, — a life that turns with disgust from satisfaction, and prays to be filled with humility in the presence of wisdom and love such as God's, — a life crowned with the exaltation which comes with the knowledge that it is the instrument of God's will. To see this, or any part of this, is to be saved from that degradation of animalism which comes to those who look only on what is before their face.

Such illustrations of the power of the obvious are not rare, but there is another more common still. I mean the rich man. He too looks on the things which are before his face. He sees his neighbors vying with one another in the carnival of luxury. It seems the natural thing to do. He has an abundance of means, he adapts himself to the feeling of the moment, he lives as his neighbors live. He is

not conscious of any wrong-doing. He is indignant when he reads of the violence of the anarchist or the ravings of the demagogue. He knows that his income only suffices comfortably to supply what his neighbors have. He gives in charity, — but after all it is grudgingly or of necessity, — because he shrinks from comment, rather than because his soul leaps up to greet an opportunity of doing good. So the years roll by. Death squeezes some tears from him. Marriage and birth bring a smile. He is well dressed, polite, well fed. He may have an eye for color and think he loves art, or a sensitive ear and think he enjoys music; but poetry has no message for him. He asks Science to pat his sleek body, not to touch with her electric finger his imagination and free him from his prison-house, and show him the unseen universe. He looks on the things which are before his face, and never sees the luxury of doing good, never knows the robust thrill of a useful life. Yet what might he not be and do? With money that gives him leisure to learn the true condition of the poor, with the education that has fitted him to be a guide, with the inherited refinement that could purify, such a man might know the joy, the power, the glory of life; and he misses it all, sells, for what he can taste and wear and touch, his birthright of happiness and influence. O the pity of it! The poor rich! The cultivated ignorant! The sad merry-makers! Paul

wrote of himself, "Having nothing, and yet possessing all things." The epitaph of the idle rich should be, "Having all things, and yet possessing nothing." For a man possesses only that over which he has power, and which he can make the servant of his higher nature. In that sense, how many can be said to possess either learning or wealth? Here is a man well educated, as we say; he stands in the club window with the man he calls his friend, whom he thinks he knows. Some day the crisis of his life comes to his friend, some great temptation assails him, some great agony wrings his soul. The things which he neither believed nor disbelieved now stand before him and insist that he shall pass judgment on them: Is there a God? Is there life after death? Is there more of man than is before his face? Will he ask you to help him then? Could you help him if he did? Yet that is the test of friendship. These men and women whom we think we know are spiritual beings. They have their times of hope and fear. Can they tell them to you? Yet they long to tell you. How their yearning eyes look into yours to search for some gleam of the life of the spirit! And if they find it, the hard man will weep, and the cynical man will thank you for love, and the sinner will take hope, and the dying will put their trust in God. Can they find God in you? If not, what has it profited to have gained the whole world? You have

lost your soul, your true self, and you have become such a thing as fashion makes instead of a son of man. I do not ask what shall become of such men, I ask what are they now; and I hear the words of Christ: "This is condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil." The deeds of the idle rich are evil because they are *selfish*. And yet they might be so different. The opportunities are so many and so near; the reward of joy and a sense of power is so immediate. Is there not here some wasted life that by a supreme act of self-denial — shall I not better say, of self-assertion? — will close his eyes to the things that are before his face, — the routine of custom, the tyranny of fashion, the senseless display of luxury, — and then open them again to the life of usefulness, and joy, and power, which is the unseen reality?

I have been speaking of the more evident illustrations of the obvious, but there are many more. For example, two men are talking together of that question compared with which all other questions are as nothing. I mean the being of God. One of them says, I do not believe in God, because there is no proof of his existence. The sun rises and sets, the seasons come and go, the sun waxes hot and the fruits ripen, the winter blows and nature sleeps.

It has always been so. There is no need of External Power. What shall his friend say? How can he prove the existence of that which is the one certainty to him? He can no more prove it to the man who looks only at the things which are before his face, than he can prove the reality of the atmosphere to the man who holds his breath and yet insists that he be shown the impalpable air. How deep this runs! A man says, If by God you mean some tendency to righteousness in the universe, that I believe in; but when you speak of the person of God, my soul rebels. What is personality? It is limitation. I see persons all around me; I believe them to be influenced by the strongest motive. I see that what we call free will and choice are the manifestations of conflict. What is free will but the victory after struggle with opposing force? What is love but the mastery of the life by some other life? The very essentials of personality are limitations. What an example of seeing what is before the face! The whole argument is the result of making the limitations of humanity the measure of life, instead of looking to the reality which these limitations cannot hold, saying, Human personality is not the measure of the Divine Personality, but only the shadow of it. With all its inevitable limitations, the essentials of personality, free determination, and love are the doorway by which the soul passes into that larger life which is about it, and

feels that it is realizing itself. To deny Divine Personality because human individuality, its type, is such a feeble thing, is like denying the sweep and power of the ocean because the little inlet of our shore is limited by the headlands which we see.

What difference does it make? some man may say. Why, this: if there be no Being self-poised in the perpetual ebb and flow of universal life, if there be no love which needs my love as the sea needs the drops of rain, — not because the rain is alien to the sea, but just because it is a part of it, — if, I say, there be no love to which the soul of man can turn, then there can be no communion. Well, if there be no communion, my life is like a sheet of water cut off from the great source of purification, — an inland sea. Which of us can claim even that for himself? Are we not rather little ponds that dot the surface of the landscape, slowly but surely drying up? It is not a matter of indifference whether or not a man believes in his Father in heaven. If he does not, it is because, even when he thinks himself most intellectual, he is looking on the things which are before his face. He is limiting his vision. And while that does not affect the reality, it does affect his relation to it; while he that is looking to see Him who is invisible feels the little inlet of his soul washed clean by the purifying tide of love, and in its backward sweep is carried into the Eternal Sea. That daily ebb and flow of

the Divine life into the human soul brings at once humility and exaltation.

Once more. He looks at the things which are before his face who with half-pitying smiles says, "Do you believe that Jesus is God?" He looks at the story of that life, and sees the unconscious babe, the growing boy, the struggling man, the baffled reformer, the exiled patriot, the man of sorrows, weak and weeping, fearful and failing, tried, condemned, and put to death. Surely we have here a man. Why obscure him by claiming for him that which destroys his true glory, which is human? This is what is before the face. What is beyond? This: that when he is most manly he is least like men; when he is most intensely human he is most like our noblest thoughts of God. While the tears roll down his face he says, "I am the resurrection and the life." When he hangs on the cross he promises paradise to the thief.

To say that Jesus is man is possible only when we give a new definition of humanity; but when we do that, we must call him the Son of God. He himself has answered the question. When the Jews would stone him because he made himself equal to God, he said: The Scripture calls them gods to whom the word of God came; it was because of the Divine life in them that the Divine Word could speak to them.

It is because I am the Son of man, it is because I am what humanity was meant to be, that I can call myself the Son of God.

The difference between us and Jesus is one of degree, not of kind. Is it in the humanity or in the divinity that this is true? In both; for they are one. To say that Jesus is man, meaning thereby such men as you and I, men with low ideals, and feeble attainments, and limited hopes, is a confusion of terms. To say that we are gods, hating, lustful, faithless, as we are, is blasphemy. But to say that Jesus is the Son of man, the normal, ideal man, the image after which the race was made, and that we, just as we are, have within us that which is akin to God and may be developed into the likeness of his Son, — to say this is to preach the Gospel. It is not a matter of indifference, it is of the utmost importance, that a man should look below the surface and have an answer to the question, "What think ye of the Christ?"

Once more. We soon shall die, and, what is worse, those we love must die. Look at that which is before your face. The hand so strong now plucks the sheets, the eye so clear now wanders from your gaze. The brain, the great workshop of a lifetime, has fallen into ruins. Is that all? I know that to many it seems so. But some of us see more than is before the face. We see conscience. We hear it speak of

an eternal law, and we know that in the life of that dying man there was a true response. We know that there were sacrifice, and love, and a sense of justice, and a high sense of honor, and faith when sight failed, and hope that lifted itself beyond the body and saw unspeakable things. It was these that made up character: the body was but the tool with which the image was engraved. That remains our helpful memory. That, we believe, stands in some form of beauty in the presence of the Eternal which it loved.

There is no limit, my friends, to the pressure of the obvious, nor to the inspiration of the invisible. It begins with the child who learns by rote or sees the meaning. The one drags the man to the animal life, the other lifts him up to see the true life of man. One decks the worldling with foolish baubles, the other reveals the glory of a useful life. To one man God is a name, to another he is a Mighty Friend. To one Jesus is a curiosity, to another he is the Saviour. One man sees the temporal, which is about to perish; the other the invisible, which is the eternal. Why should we speak of such things? That each of us may examine himself, and pray, "Lord, let me not limit the vision of my soul to that which is before my face, but fill me with that vision of limitless desires which is the foretaste of eternal life."

XVIII.

ALL SOULS DAY.

YESTERDAY was All Saints Day. We gathered together at that great feast of the Church, to celebrate the memory of those who have done great work in the Church of God, — the martyrs who have given their lives, the confessors who have endured great suffering, the teachers of the Church who have changed the current of theology, the great leaders and directors of the Church's course.

But to-day is called in the calendar of the Romish Church All Souls Day. It seems strange that such a day should have been dropped from the ritual year of the English Church. For what is it that All Souls Day brings to our minds? It is not what we may call the great aristocracy of the Church, whose memory we celebrated yesterday. It is the greater thought, the democratic idea of the Church, the great mass of the people of God who have suffered and died bearing witness to the truth, all unknown except to the few who stood near them in the march of the host. All Souls Day brings to our minds the

thought of the great multitude of God's faithful children that has passed from the seen to the unseen. And we ask ourselves on such a day as this, What is their life? How do they employ themselves? What is their thought? What is their condition?

The life of the dead is our subject for this morning.

The first question that naturally suggests itself is the most important of all, — Do the dead live? It seems so hard for us to understand how they live, so difficult to picture to our minds the conditions in which they continue to exist. There are men who say, It seems to us altogether improbable that there is any life beyond that which we now know. Life is so associated in our minds with this flesh and these bones, that it seems impossible to imagine the existence of any life after the earthly frame has crumbled to the dust.

Of course, if this be so, then there can be no God, because God can have no frame such as we have. And if life, spiritual life, is dependent upon this earthly frame, then of course there can be no such thing as a spiritual being existing apart from it.

But if there be a God, — if there be such a thing in this universe as intelligence, love, will, self-consciousness, and self-determination, apart from any physical

form, — then, of course, it is possible that there should be many such lives. If God exist, then it is possible that the dead may live. If God does not exist, then the dead do not live.

And so we bring it back finally, as we must bring back all questions, to the existence of God. If God live, then spiritual life is possible apart from this earthly tabernacle. If God does not live, it is not possible.

So, then, unless we are prepared to say that we do not believe in the existence of God, but are only confused in our minds in regard to the condition of the dead, supposing them to live at all, what must their life be? How shall we determine?

There was a man who lived near to Jesus Christ, who was filled with his spirit, and was his dearest friend. That man entered into a great spiritual experience, and declared that he saw things and heard words such as no other human being has ever seen or heard. That was John. And in the seventh chapter of his Revelation, at the sixteenth and seventeenth verses, he has written these words: "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

This is John's description of the life of the dead.

Let us consider it this morning, and ask ourselves what it implies, and what light it throws on the great mystery which has so often perplexed us.

The imagery is Oriental. To a dweller in the East, the first essential is protection from the heat of the sun, and from the radiating heat that pours forth in the evening, the one blasting the energies at noonday, the other enervating the spirits at the coming of the night; and then waters to drink in a thirsty land. Those were the things that seemed to this man John, as they have seemed to every Oriental, the first conditions essential for life, — protection from heat and abundance of living waters.

And now let us enlarge our thought. From this simple statement given by St. John, in the imagery which would appeal to those who first heard these words, let us enlarge our thought, and say to ourselves, The life of the dead is a protected life. "They hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither doth the sun light on them, nor any heat." To how many has this thought brought great thankfulness! The lives we have known are protected from those ills which made life so hard to bear. Think of the great multitude that stands before God to-day. Think of the little children brought into this world all warped and twisted, so that they never knew how to play. Think of the young that have

grown up with the promise of joy, only to see the cup of happiness dashed from their lips. Think of the lives that have been misunderstood, — the lives that have gone on day by day doing their duty, sacrificing themselves, seeking only for what was noble and pure and of good report, and all the time misunderstood, unappreciated, without sympathy, without the encouragement which they so much longed for, left to bear the burden and the heat of the day alone. Think of those who have lain for years and years on the bed of sickness, only asking that the day might come when their sufferings should have an end. Think of the women that have borne great burdens, — burdens not only of misapprehension, of misunderstanding, but of cruel brutality, and of harshness, and of degrading oppression. Think of the multitudes that have risen day by day only to labor and toil, and have lain down at night too feeble, too weary, too much oppressed, for any thought of God, crushed by the burden and the labor of life. Think, in one word, my friends, of all that you and I have known, of all the great multitude of whom we have read, to whom this life has been bearable, but bearable only, — full of disappointment, full of pain, full of suffering, full of great sorrow and great discouragement.

Now the word of St. John is that from all these things they are protected. "They hunger no more,

neither thirst any more; neither doth the sun light on them, nor any heat." A life free from care and responsibility, and the burden and heat of the day.

That is the first thought that St. John would impress upon us in regard to the life of the dead. O, as we think of it to-day, how grateful we must be! There is no thought of what shall come to us; only a great thankfulness that such good things have come to them, that their life is protected. Nevermore can those things that are so hard for us light on them. There never again can they enter into the life that they have once known, and find its bitterness, and its weariness, and its sadness. All Souls Day should be full of joy for the protected life of the dead.

But that is not all. "They hunger no more, neither thirst any more; and the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne doth lead them to fountains of living waters." A life of satisfaction; a life in which every wish and aspiration of the soul is gratified. What a life is that, my friends! I like to think, this morning, of the great multitude of God's children who have entered into that new world and into that new life, seeking such different things because their needs are so different. One soul seeks only for rest; all that it needs is rest, and that is given it. Another soul needs peace and harmony after the long struggle to make peace on earth. Another has been frightened, and longs for the sense

of safety, and that is given. Another has all through life been thirsting for the sight of the Eternal Beauty, which no picture, no statue, no flaming of the sky at sunset, could adequately express. "We shall see," said the prophet long ago, speaking for these artistic souls, — "we shall see the King in his beauty." Others have found the satisfaction of their souls in "the sound of the harpers playing on the harps." The great multitude whose souls have been stirred by music, and yet in the most glorious symphony, in the noblest chorus, have always felt the human discord that underlaid the harmony, — there they are satisfied, there the perfect harmony of the Eternal Life soothes, and strengthens, and invigorates, and inspires them.

Others have laid hold of the tree of the knowledge of life. All through life they hungered for knowledge, and yet all getting of knowledge was the getting also of sorrow. There it is changed. There the tree of life is seen to be the tree of knowledge. Drinking deep of the Divine life, filling themselves with the life of the Lamb of God, these souls have found that not through knowledge did they gain life, but that through life they have gained knowledge.

O how wonderful it is to think of this vast expansion of humanity, as the flower expands that has been transplanted into a more genial clime! It is

good to think of the lives that are satisfied to-day, as they stand before the throne of God, and are led by the Lamb to the living fountains of waters. How different it all is! Who can describe it? It is like the announcement that should come forth from the King that the gates of the city are open on every side, and that his people may come in to some great feast that has been prepared for them. How we see them crowding in! Each man starts for the gate that stands opposite the little hut in which he has lived. Multitudes are crowding in from the north and the south and the east and the west. Here are the little children, not content to go in with the great multitude through the arching gate that is spanning the walls of the city, but finding some little place broken in the wall that they crawl through with laughter and joy, glad because it is different from the common way on which the multitude is pressing.

The life satisfied; the life rejoicing in the knowledge of the thing that it has dreamed of as impossible; the life rejoicing in the knowledge that every hope that has shot across its sky was the witness to a reality which God had prepared for them that love him;—we take it all up, and we put it into the words of the old hymn we have sung so often,—

> "Every longing satisfied,
> With full salvation blessed."

Full salvation, my friends. Perfect health of the soul that has been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, — the perfect health of the soul that has found at last its home, standing in the presence of God. Sin has fallen away like some filthy garment, and the soul stands in the presence of the King, and the glory of the King clothes it, and it finds its satisfaction in beholding his beauty.

And how has all this come to pass? How has this great change been effected? Is it the result of a mere change of place? Is it the result merely of the falling off of this fleshly covering? We cannot think so, and St. John would not have us think so, for he tells us that this protection and this satisfaction in the new life come with the leading of the Lamb. "And the Lamb shall lead them forth."

The Lamb leads those who follow. The spirit of Jesus is typified by the Lamb. The spirit of perfect sacrifice is meant by the Lamb. And that spirit has entered into the lives of these men and women, and these little children. It is the new spirit that has taken possession of them in the new life that has made the protection and the eternal satisfaction. It opens up before us the thought of the endless progress of the dead. They are being led by the Lamb. There is no limit to be put to the glory and the joy of this life. Day by day, — if we may speak of days, —

day by day they are being led by the Lamb. The living water is never dried up. The thirst of the great multitude is unable to consume it. More and more they are led on by the Lamb, the perfect Sacrifice, the Son of God, the Life in which God is well pleased.

That is the life, my friends, that the dead are following; and in following it they find their eternal satisfaction and their undying joy; — a life protected; a life satisfied; a life from which monotony has been forever banished, because there is eternal progress under the leadership of the Lamb of God. That is the life that St. John brings before us, and which we would call to mind on this day.

And now turn back from this picture of the life of the dead to that other one with which we are so much more familiar, which we may call the death of the living. We are not protected. On us the sun does light and the heat does burn; with us the sorrow and sin, and suffering and pain, and misunderstanding and cruel suspicion, and unkindness and weariness, and discouragement and hopelessness exist. How different is the life that you and I know from the life that St. John has revealed as the life of the dead! Here there is not protection; there is not satisfaction; there is not daily progress in the knowledge of the love and power of God. How sad it all is! How dark the picture is, as compared

with the glory that is revealed by the other! And I think it is because of this picture, the picture of dissatisfaction, the picture of the life unprotected, the picture of the life that does not make progress in holiness and joy, — I think it is because of the presence of this picture that men so often ask themselves, Things being as they are, how is it possible that the dead should have perfect joy? How can it be that the mother can be satisfied, and full of happiness, and absolutely content, while the son for whom she prayed so long is wandering in the paths of sin? How can the father be satisfied when the daughter that he loved and honored and respected is disgracing his name on earth? How can the friend be joyful when the friend that on earth was dearer than life itself is left to bear the burden and heat of the day alone? How can his joy be perfect, while there is loneliness and weariness for the friend that has been left behind?

Some such thoughts as these come into our minds as we consider the life of the dead; and we ask ourselves, How is it possible that their joy can be complete when our life is so weary, and our burden is so heavy, and our pain is so keen?

Now as I read these words of St. John it seems to me that he entered into that great mystery. And he has not pretended, I think, that their joy is complete. He felt as the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews

felt, who wrote concerning the dead: "God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect." To the writer of that Epistle it seemed impossible that the dead should enter into the full perfection of the glory of the eternal life until all the host had been gathered up. It was like the march into the Promised Land. The multitude was winding its way through the desert, and at last it came to the banks of the Jordan. How shall it enter in? It seemed to this man as if it were not any longer one great single column that was entering slowly into the promised land, the rear in the desert bitten by the serpents, parched by the heat, thirsty for the want of water, and the others luxuriating in the land of milk and honey. No, to him it seems as if the true joy had indeed begun, but was not perfected, — as if the multitude were halting on the very brink of the eternal glory of God, waiting for the coming up of the rear column that was still on the pilgrimage in the wilderness.

That is the thought that St. John, I think, would present to our minds. He does not wish us to believe that the dead have entered into an oblivion of the misery, and the weakness, and the weariness of the human life that they have left behind.

Then we say, If they have not forgotten, how can they be happy? how is it possible that their hearts

should not be wrung with pain as they look back and remember that which they once knew, as they look down and see that with which we are so familiar?

St. John did not believe that their happiness was complete. He did believe that their life was protected. He did believe that they were being satisfied day by day, because they were following the Lamb. But he adds, "God shall wipe away all tears from off their faces." Tears! Yes, tears in that glorious life, — tears that must be there, because of the incompleteness of human life, because of the misery and the sin, with its penalty, of those who are so dear to the dead who know the life of God.

"God shall wipe away all tears from off their faces." It is inevitable that they should sorrow. It is no less inevitable that their sorrow should be comforted of God. See what it would be were it otherwise. You and I, under the weight of our burden, in the midst of our temptation, with the weariness and the disgust of life which are so often so strong within us, — we, my friends, in all our incompleteness, are yet able to lift up our hearts and rejoice at the life into which the dead have entered. Now if they, in the great joy that has come to them, have become oblivious of us, then their life is a worse life than ours. It is the apotheosis of selfishness. They have entered into their joy and forgotten us. Like the chief butler who was delivered from

the prison, Joseph remembered him, but he forgot Joseph. Such a thought is impossible. If their life is a following of the Lamb, it must be that their sympathy and their love for us are infinitely deeper and stronger than our thankfulness for their great joy.

No, the life of the dead is not yet perfect; and it cannot be perfect until the number of God's elect is full. There is sorrow and there are tears in the heavenly life. But that sorrow is comforted of God, and those tears are wiped away by God.

We seem to see, then, the life of the dead. It is protected from those ills with which we are familiar. It is being satisfied day by day. It is progressing under the leadership of the Lamb. And yet there comes the remembrance of the sorrow of life. There comes a flashing insight into the temptation of life. There comes an awful pang at the revelation of the sin of those that are loved. And yet the life is comforted, because it is enveloped by the power and the glory and the love of God, who is all wisdom and all might and abounding mercy.

The details of our life may be no more understood by them than theirs are by us. Only standing before the throne of God there comes the eternal comfort that must always come with the remembrance of power and wisdom and goodness. And so their tears are wiped away. So their faces are dried from the tear-drops that stain them, as the roses are dried

from the rain on the summer afternoon as the sun breaks from the cloud and kisses them and dries their faces. It is not a life without sorrow. It is a life comforted of God.

Thus, then, my friends, we think to-day of the dead. We think of them and rejoice. We do not stand unmoved at an open grave. Jesus wept. We do not pretend that pain is not pain, nor sorrow sorrow. We do not call ourselves Stoics, men who are not affected by the ills of life. We call ourselves the disciples and friends of the Man of sorrows. But we try to see the vision of John, and we see that the dead whom we have loved are protected from every ill. We rejoice that they are being satisfied. We lift up our hearts in thankfulness to God because we see them follow the Lamb. Our hearts are filled with an inexpressible and pathetic joy as we see them comforted of God.

And what is their word to us? It is, Follow the Lamb. Strive to have the spirit of Jesus Christ. For they that have that spirit have now the foretaste of the life of the dead. The ills of life are not so great:

> "I fear no ill with Thee at hand to bless,
> Ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness."

Follow the Lamb; for in following Him and striving to have His spirit, there comes the satisfaction

that the soul can find in no other way; and all the joy and beauty and glory of life is found to have its interpretation and its full realization in the beauty of the life of Jesus Christ.

Follow the Lamb. So that each day comes a progress in holiness and knowledge and joy.

Follow the Lamb. And so you shall know the comfort that comes of God. They who live that life now shall enter into the new city and find that it is not strange. Just as we felt when we have come to some city of which we have read, or pictures of which we have seen. We have felt, Why, I have often been here before. And yet, as day by day went on and we beheld new glories and new splendors of the city, we felt that we had had indeed the foretaste, we knew in some sense what to expect, but no expectation could begin to equal the realization of the glory and the splendor of the new land.

And so, if we follow the Lamb, our lives will be in some sense protected. Our souls will begin to know the satisfaction of the life of God, and we shall be comforted by the remembrance of eternal wisdom, almighty power, and undying love. And then when the end comes for you and me, and you and I are spoken of as the dead, we shall enter into that last experience, and find it one of infinite joy and infinite peace. For when you and I have reached that heavenly land, and stand on the borders of eternity, we

shall not forget the life that has been lived. As our souls are satisfied, as we find comfort in the Eternal Protection, as we follow the Lamb from one fountain to another and drink with exceeding joy, there shall come from time to time, climbing up and falling on the shore of the eternal life, some great wave of memory; and we shall look back to this little island in the eternal sea and behold the ones we love, who, like shipwrecked sailors, look across the great waste, and wait for the coming of the ship that takes them home. And no doubt a cry will go up from us as we remember what life was, and what to them life is. But in that very moment we shall be enveloped in the eternal arms, and the power and the wisdom and the love of God shall comfort our hearts, and the glory of his presence shall wipe away all tears from off our faces.

My dear people, remember the words of St. Paul, "If by any means I might attain to the resurrection of the dead." Remember the words of our Lord, "In your patience ye shall win your souls."

XIX.

PHILLIPS BROOKS: THE LOVE OF GOD AND THE SERVICE OF MAN.

I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so do I. — St. John, xiv. 31.

WE buried him like a king, for so he was. Had a stranger stood in our city and asked what this great movement meant, he could have read the history of his life in his burial. For it was the Loyal Legion that took possession of the dead body and stood in silent guard beside it while the multitude gazed for the last time upon his face; — and then into the church he loved so dearly and served so faithfully the young men who seemed to symbolize perpetual youth bore aloft the great body about which his clergy and people gathered to pray God for strength to help in time of need; — and then it was the great multitude of the city that he had served for so many years, that he loved with such a deep and abiding love, that he glorified because of the hope that filled his heart for every child of God, who filled the great square and sang the hymn he loved so well, —

"O God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast,
And our eternal home!" —

and then, through the College yard where the hundreds and hundreds of those young men whose joy it had been to listen to him, whose inspiration he had often been, stood with uncovered heads, the funeral procession took its way beneath the tolling of the College bell; and lastly, about the grave stood the friends, disciples, and faithful women that had followed him to the end.

Now, in what did his kingliness consist? For it is inevitable that we speak of that to-day, we can think of nothing else, and therefore we can speak of nothing else. It was indeed a marvellous life, it was so rich in many qualities; there was that beautiful poetic faculty allied with the power to centre the whole attention on the simplest details of business; there was that marvellous love of humanity, and the capacity to draw one friend to his heart; there was freedom from superstition, and deep and awful reverence; there was that great belief in liberty, and yet the constant sense of service; there was that life so capable of enjoyment, and yet so able to weep with them that wept. It was not, my friends, it seems to me, — it was not that he possessed one gift

in excess, but that he held together so many different gifts in perfect and beautiful harmony. The things that are so often divorced in other men's lives were wedded in him. There, it seems to me, is found the greatness of his character, and, like all great men, he struck the roots of his nature deep down into the soil of the time and country of which he formed a part.

Think what a time it was when he was born. Then Goethe's influence was beginning to be felt for the first time in England; Coleridge's mysticism was leading men to look beyond the clouds to their eternal home; Wordsworth's thrush-like voice was at last finding its echo in the hearts of weary men who plodded along the dusty way; Carlyle was beginning to thunder at the gates of sham; Emerson was flowing like some wide, deep river leading men to the eternal sea. While he was a youth, Browning was giving forth those bugle blasts of optimism that awoke an echo in his heart; but, above all, his friend and companion, Tennyson, was drawing out those new stops in the great organ of English speech which are destined, while that language is spoken, to strengthen and ennoble the human race. How many times we have heard him say, "You men were born too late. You have never known what it was to stand in the college yard with the last poem in your hand, and know that it had been sung across the seas to *you*."

All that had a deep and abiding influence on his life. That marvellous diction, that rich and gorgeous style, that quickness of perception in regard to literature, that thirst for poetry, so that at the last his bed was covered with the books that had been his friends and companions in that most lonely life, — its influence is seen in all that he did; it begot the fastidious taste, the keen appreciation of beauty, the high ideal of literature; and that was one reason why he always turned back with such passionate love to the great University that bore him. What had it not done for him? It had led him to drink at the source of thought. It had introduced him to those who, though he never saw them, became his truest friends. It was partly, I think, because he lived when he did, because he received, as it were from the writer's hand, the latest message to the world, that he so rejoiced in the present, and felt that no age had been richer in the gifts of the Spirit, no time had more strongly felt the influence of the character of Christ.

And then, again, his love for righteousness, his uncompromising belief in the purifying power of freedom. How it was beaten and welded together by the blows of the Civil War! He never outgrew the influence of that dark hour, and nothing that ever came in Church or State could shake his faith in the people and in the purifying power of freedom, not

because it freed men from restraint, but because it opened up to every man the possibility of the completion of his character by the exercise of all of his faculties untrammelled by oppression, and called to their highest opportunity by the voice of God himself.

So it was in his relation to the new reformation in which he was playing so great a part. When he was a youth, Calvinism was beginning already to weaken and totter to its fall. He heard Theodore Parker thunder at the gates of the castle that had set itself against Calvinism, and he knew that no negation that could be preached would ever satisfy the thirst of the souls of men for the truth of the Living God.

He was born when the Tractarian movement in England was at its height; he saw the beginning of that larger knowledge which has shaken the faith of so many; he neither turned to the ecclesiasticism which built barriers to stem the flow of the free inquiring spirit, nor, on the other hand, did he lose himself in the wastes of speculation till he knew not whence he came or whither he was going.

It was in the midst of those days, in the latter forties and the beginning of the fifties, when the storm clouds were gathering on every side, that he heard the voice of that divine [1] who, he has told me again and again, was the greatest preacher that this country

[1] Alexander H. Vinton, at that time Rector of St. Paul's Church.

has ever heard, holding up to the eyes of men the character of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. And to that Mastership he gave himself soul and body; he believed that if Jesus had ever saved He could save to-day, and in that faith he never faltered. It was no dictum of the Church in which he believed; it was no tradition that had come down through the ages that satisfied that soul; it was belief in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, manifesting the sonship of every man and woman on this earth to God. That was his Gospel, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God."

That was his message. Believe that Jesus is the manifestation of the Divine Life, and you will know in that moment of belief that the Divine Life is a part of you. It was no dictum; it was no tradition; it was no creed, in the sense in which that word is often used. It was the conviction that he was one with God, because he was united to Jesus Christ, and that every man was essentially a part of God, and that the Gospel was to be the illuminator of the darkness of men's hearts to show them the glory which belonged to them.

And so he held to that faith and held to his Church with such deep love, with such loyalty to its order, with such a firm belief and high hope for its possibilities; and yet he neither believed, nor wished men to think that he believed, that his Church was the only

manifestation of the life of the Son of Man, — the Son of God upon this earth. Far from it; he believed in it and loved it, chiefly, I think, because he thought it was the most catholic of all the companies of disciples, because to him it was the house of so many rooms. "No place," — how often he has said it, — "no place like Boston to preach the Gospel; no Church like ours of which to be a minister." And yet that loyalty and love enabled him, because the roots of his being struck down deep into the life of the Son of God, — enabled him to have that vast tolerance that embraced and took in men of other denominations, so that to-day throughout the English-speaking world his name is an inspiration in every company of Christ's disciples.

How he gloried in the rectitude of the Puritans! How he rejoiced in the free spirit that blew through Unitarianism! How his heart was moved by the revivals of Moody and the philanthropy of General Booth! No movement of the human spirit towards God was without his sympathy and his help; for wherever the spirit of man was troubled there he saw Bethesda, and the angel of our God descending into the troubled waters. So he loved his own, and loved them to the end. But he loved also those of other names, with other ways of expressing themselves, for they were all the children of one God; and out of all the boundaries of the churches, beyond

the confines of Christianity, his great spirit roamed to welcome the beginning of day in the twilight of heathenism; — ay, deep down into the darkness where men cry like some lost child; in the midst of the quarrelsomeness of the children over the division of the inheritance; among those who, like girls love to deck themselves; — though it wearied him, and exasperated him, and called forth sometimes the strong expression of his indignation, it was but for a moment; he turned again, and saw the good that held them up and made them lovable. He hated controversy, and sought wherever he might be to find the companionship of the Son of God. He had the power

> "To see a good in evil, and a hope
> In ill-success, to sympathize, be proud
> Of their half reasons, faint aspirings, dim
> Struggles for truth, their poorest fallacies,
> Their prejudice, and fears, and cares, and doubts
> Which all touch upon nobleness, despite
> Their error, all tend upwardly though weak,
> Like plants in mines which never saw the sun,
> But dream of him, and guess where he may be,
> And do their best to climb and get to him."

All this that Paracelsus knew not and failed, he knew, and therefore was strong and loving.

And so, my friends, about his Creed. When the storm of misrepresentation burst upon him, even to those who were nearest to him he would only say: "It is a simple question of honesty. How can they

believe that I would say the Creed if I did not believe the Creed?" On that he took his stand. If any man cared to look into that great face and say, "I believe that you are a liar," then he might do it. He feared no man. And yet how did he believe his Creed? Not as a piece of tradition; not as something that had once been a power in the past, but of no power now, but must be recited simply in order that men might receive the emoluments that came because of that recitation. Far from it. He said his Creed with that free spirit in which he did everything else, because those grand historic words did express his profound conviction in regard to the Gospel of our Saviour, that God is our Creator-Father, that Jesus Christ is the manifestation of the Living God, that the Spirit of God is in the heart of every man. The Creed was to him the *symbol* of the faith once delivered to the saints. But the words of the Church must be like the words of Jesus, — spirit and life. And he would not be much troubled by this man's or that man's interpretation of his belief; nor would he be driven out of the synagogue because he could not pronounce the Shibboleth, but he would say, with free, glad heart, the great historic words of the Creed, saying them with an intensity of belief that I think many of us fail to understand. How often he used to say, "What the world needs is not less belief, but more belief. As the years roll on, the world will become more

faithful, believing more and more." It was not quantity that he thought of, but the quality of faith, not the amount that can be written in a book, but the intensity of the spirit's apprehension.

Now, how did he lead this life? How was it that he who joyed so in beauty was never enervated? How was it that he who knew, as none of us can know, the misery and disgrace and sin of life, could always have lived in such an atmosphere of hope? How was it that he could be so loyal to his Church, and yet so liberal in his sympathy with those with whom in many respects he could not agree? How was it that he could have such faith in freedom, when he saw how the removing of the barriers often leads to degradation? How was it that with his sweet poetic fancy he could bring himself to the drudgery of work? How was it, my friends, that he, with his great heart beating for every noble cause, could stand and reveal himself to one or two? How was it that with all he had to do he never complained? How was it that, whenever man, woman, or a little child went to him, he rose up instantly and gladly? How many, how many of you must have had him stand and look from his great height into your eyes when you had asked him to preach somewhere, to do some work, to undertake something more in the midst of that tumultuous life, and say, "I thank you for this

opportunity." Yes, my friends, we see him as he was. The spirit of a little child was enthroned in the midst of his life, and it led that huge frame to stand and serve as a servant at the banquet of life; it turned that mighty mind to worship truth; it led that great heart to beat with love for all who suffered and were sad; and to rejoice with those who had begun to see the kindness of their God; it led him to do the simplest duty day after day with a glad and cheerful heart. And why? Because he loved the Father, he loved the Father, he lived in the consciousness of God, and the simplest duty that came before him was referred to eternal principles; the troubled and broken heart was seen in the light of the love of Jesus Christ, and the smoking flax was to him the indication of the presence of the living God; he lived in the love of his Father, and therefore whatsoever his Father commanded he tried to do. And his Father's commands were not words that fell from the stars, they were the broken accents of humanity; the shameful woman that brought her baby and laid it at his feet, and said, "What shall I do?" The command of his Father was the message of the dying suicide at midnight in the hospital, "Come to me before I am gone." The command of his Father was the cry of the little child, lost, not knowing its father's name, or its father's home; and he rose up instantly, be-

cause he loved the Father, and did the commands that his Father gave him. God and opportunity, — these were the poles between which the sphere of that noble life did turn from the rising to the setting of its day.

What has that life to say to you and to me? O, as that vast multitude lifted up Wesley's hymn, and cried,

> "Cover my defenceless head
> With the shadow of Thy wing,"

how many a soul must have felt that now he must live nearer God. God help us so to live! God bless us in our great opportunity to gather up a little of that spirit and make it known in home, in schoolroom, in the warehouse where we transact our business, in the city streets, and in the church! God make us purer, simpler, truer, more diligent, nobler men and women, because of that example which it has been our privilege to see, and know, and love!

XX.

PHILLIPS BROOKS: THE PORTION OF THE FIRST-BORN.[1]

And it came to pass, when they were gone over, that Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee. And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me. — 2 KINGS, ii. 9.

THIS wonderfully dramatic story of the ascension of Elijah is typical of what goes on in the life of many a man who is called upon to pass through such an experience as that of Elisha's; to have that which is the dearest and greatest thing to him taken from his sight. Think, for a moment, what the story is. Elijah tells Elisha that the Lord has called him to go to Bethel, and asks him to remain behind. But Elisha will not part from him. The sons of the prophets at Bethel come forth to Elisha, and tell him that it has been revealed to them that to-day his Master shall be taken away. It has been revealed to him, too, only it is impossible for him to speak of it. "I know it," he says, "hold ye your peace."

[1] Delivered before the Boston Young Men's Christian Union, Sunday evening, January 29, 1893.

Again Elijah says to him, "Tarry here, for the Lord hath sent me to Jericho." And again he says, "I will not leave thee." The sons of the prophets at Jericho come forth to tell him that his Master shall be taken away; and again he says, "I know it; hold ye your peace."

Once more Elijah tells him to tarry there, for the Lord hath sent him to pass over Jordan; but he breaks out with a great cry, "As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee." And so they two went on.

Do you not know some such experience as that? I am sure that many of us do. There has come first the intimation that this companionship which has been the joy and the comfort and the glory of our life is to be ended; and then friends, with officious kindliness, insist upon telling us explicitly that which we ourselves have long known, but of which we cannot speak. It seems as if it could not be. We say to our Master, as Elisha said to his, "As the Lord liveth, I will not leave thee. I will go with thee to Bethel, to Jericho, over Jordan; wheresoever thou goest, I will go too. It is not possible that my life should go on, a life that has been so wrapped up in yours, a life that has known this companionship for so many years, — it is not possible that it should go on without that companionship. As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee."

And yet it must be.

Look once more at the story. After they have passed over Jordan, Elijah turns to Elisha and says, "Before I be taken away from thee, ask what I shall do for thee." And Elisha says, "Let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me." Elijah answers, "This is a hard thing that thou hast asked; nevertheless, if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so."

What does this mean? We sometimes think that what Elisha was asking of Elijah was, that he should be endowed with twice the power that the great prophet, whom he called the chariot and horseman of Israel, had had. And Elijah's answer, "Thou hast asked a hard thing," seems to lend color to this interpretation.

But that is not the meaning of it. What Elisha is asking is that he shall have the portion of the first-born. The old Jewish law required that, when the father died and his property was to be distributed, the first-born son should have a double portion. The great law of primogeniture, which has lasted down into our own day, has played an important part in the history of the world; and whatever may have been its disadvantages, it certainly has served to keep together great and noble properties. By dividing equally among all the sons, the property, which had been in some sort the outward sign of the nobility of the family to which it belonged, would soon have

been dissipated; but by passing it on to one son, who should feel at once the glory and the responsibility of the heritage of the material property that had continued in the same line from generation to generation, it would remain a power for good.

Now, this is what Elisha is asking of Elijah. Let it not be, he says, let it not be that I shall stand to you only as one of the sons of the prophets who are on yonder hillside, standing afar off and wondering at this strange thing which has come to pass. Through all these years we have walked together. What I am, you have made me. Now let me stand to you in the relation of the first-born son. In the dividing of thy spiritual property, grant to me the double portion. And Elijah's answer is somewhat like the answer of the Lord to the sons of Zebedee, who asked to sit on the right hand, and on the left, in his glory. "It is not mine to give," says Jesus; "but it shall be given to them for whom it has been prepared by my Father." "You ask a hard thing," says Elijah; "nevertheless, if thou shalt *see* me when I am taken from thee, it shall be done unto thee; if not, it shall not be done."

The great gifts of life are not the result of favoritism. There is the everlasting law that he who seeks shall find, that he who has shall receive more. If you have capacity to receive God's gifts, no gift of God shall be withheld from you. If you can *see* me, says Elijah, if, when I am taken from your physical

sight there enter into your soul the unalterable conviction that I am still alive, that the power that has manifested itself through my life is manifesting itself still, if the reality of my existence so takes possession of you that when I am taken away from you you can see me, then you shall have the double portion of my spirit. When the property that I have accumulated is divided, you shall have the double portion, and stand to me as the first-born son.

Then comes the last step in this story. The friends are parted one from another. Elijah goes up by a whirlwind into heaven. Elisha sees him, but he cries, "My father, my father, thou art the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof! What is to become of Israel? What is to become of the Church of God? What is to become of that great work which, by thy power, has been built up? My father, my father, thou art gone.

How that cry, my friends, has rung through this community in these last days. How many a man has felt, as Elisha did, that the chariot and horsemen of Israel have been taken away!

But the story does not end there. We are told that after that passionate burst of grief the man of God turned to the work that was before him, and, taking up the mantle of Elisha that fell from him, went back and stood by the bank of the river of Jordan, and smote the waters, and cried, "Where is the

Lord God of Elijah?" And when he had so cried, the waters parted for him, and he went over as his master had done. He went to the village on the other side, and, when the people told him that the waters thereof were bitter, he took a cruise of salt and sweetened those waters. He took up the mantle of Elijah, he called upon the God of Elijah, and he began, — in spite of his loneliness, in spite of his despondency, — he began to do the great work that through all these years Elijah had so magnificently done.

I have chosen these words to speak to you about to-night, my friends, not that we might find in this old book a story that reminds us of our own experience, but rather that we may find in that story an inspiration for the life that is now before us.

He, who has been to us as the chariot and horsemen of Israel has been taken away. What shall we do?

I ask you, first of all, not to let this great experience of your life pass away without claiming the position that belongs to you. The whole world mourns to-day. Other cities beside our own are draped in black. But we, we the people of Boston, have a right that none others have to ask that the double portion of his spirit should be upon us. Let us claim our advantages as the first-born sons. Let us remember his love for this city, let us remember his belief in this city, let us remember the years of

labor and the splendid inspiration that he has imparted to us. Let others stand on the hillside and watch from afar this great thing. But you and I have seen him pass into the heavens, you and I are convinced that that life which has been such a power for good for so many years is as alive to-day, ay, is more alive to-day than ever. We see him. We know that that life is a power still for goodness, is an inspiration to some soul, is a manifestation, somewhere, of the glory and power of God.

We cry, "My father, my father, thou art the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof!" That cry is natural. That cry is inevitable. But let there mingle with it the prayer, Grant that a double portion of thy spirit may be upon me. Grant, now that thy spiritual property is to be divided, that it may not be dissipated, that it may not pass away into many hands, and so fail to be the power that it might be were it kept together by one strong, loving son. Let the city of Boston claim its place as the first-born, and ask that the double portion of the spiritual property may be left to its keeping, determining that by the power of God it shall be used for all good and noble and true purposes.

But with the prayer must go action. Let us take up the mantle of the prophet that has fallen from him. What is the mantle of the prophet? The mantle, the outward covering of the man, is that which is most

characteristic of him. When we come to turn over those things that were associated with the life of some dear friend, there is nothing that brings the face and form of that friend back to us with so much power as some garment that in life he wore. That is the mantle, the outward sign of the man's presence, the most characteristic thing in his life.

That is what I ask you to take up to-night. And yet, you may well say, How can we take up the mantle of this man? How can we be what he was? Indeed, we cannot be what he was. And yet, I think if we ask ourselves what was the most characteristic thing in him, what was the one thing that was most personal in his life, it will throw light upon our perplexity. We cannot take up the great gifts that he had. There is a sense in which those gifts can hardly be called his own. We cannot take up that magnificent physical presence; but indeed that physical presence was an inheritance, and, in that sense, can hardly be called his own. It is not the gifts of a man always that are peculiarly his own. It is the will and spirit with which those gifts are used.

Now, if you ask what was the most characteristic trait of Phillips Brooks's personality, I think you can find it in the words of the old preacher, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." That was the characteristic of this man. We remember his genius, but we forget his labor. We marvel at the

words that flowed so freely from his great mind, but we forget the silent, lonely hours in which he dug deep the channels for the thought to flow.

That a man should have been able to preach as he did, was certainly a great marvel. That a man should have been able to carry on all the multitudinous details of such a life as his, without apparent hurry, without fretfulness, with the absence of friction, that is another marvel. But, when you combine the two in one man, when you see a man with that marvellous power of swaying the multitudes, and that rare gift of giving his whole life to one particular soul that came before him with its grief, with its burden, with its sin, with its doubt, with its joy, then indeed you have at once a marvellous character. And yet, in all its marvel, one that may be most truly imitated. For what you and I have to do in order to take up his mantle is, not to receive his gifts, but to have his spirit of self-consecration.

That was his mantle, that was his characteristic, that whatsoever he found to do, he did it with all his might. Ay, rather, he did it with the might of God. He did it in the spirit of the prophet of whom I have been speaking so much this evening. His constant thought was, "As the Lord liveth before whom I stand."

When the details of that great life are better known than they can be to most of us now, the

thing, I think, that will strike us most will be to learn how his days were filled with ceaseless interruptions. Men are spellbound even by the printed word of his sermons. Multitudes hung breathless upon his words when they were spoken. But O how much more wonderful those sermons would seem if we could see the great troop that passes, not merely between the paragraphs, but between the sentences and the words of those sermons. Sometimes he would be called away from the same sentence four or five times before it could be completed. And yet, there was no evidence of impatience. Each one of those was, to him, the call of God.

Some of us will remember, as long as we remember anything, a great sermon that he preached from the words, "I am come forth from the Father, and am come to the world: again I leave the world, and go unto the Father," — and will remember his application of that great law of Christ's life to our lives. He said that should be the life of every man. Living with God, he should be able to come into this world of sorrow and sin and tumult and perplexity and trial, and bring some of God's Spirit to heal and comfort and ennoble it. And then, when the occasion for that service had ended, he should return again to God, and, in the communion with his Father, get the strength and the inspiration and the glory which again the world would need.

Indeed, that was his life. Coming into the world, no matter what it was that the world wished from him, making it the invariable rule that he would always speak or preach wherever and by whomsoever he was asked, unless that special time had been promised elsewhere. And then, when that occasion was over, returning again to that secret communion with his Father which kept his greatness humble and his power gentle.

Surely, in some sense, you and I might take up that mantle. You and I may imitate that characteristic. We may so consecrate ourselves, soul and body, with just such capacity as we have, with such little gifts as have been granted to us, that, in the spirit of our master and of our friend, we may build up the kingdom of Israel.

When I think of this great city that is yet to be built about the hills of old Boston, when I think of his interest in that new city, his belief in it and his hope for it, I ask myself, Because he is gone, shall his spirit not dwell here as he dwelt so long among the narrow streets, and, in the day of small things, in the lesser city?

It depends, my friends, upon you. You, whom he loved; you, whom he so gladly served; this Union which he believed in and expected great things from; — it depends upon you, young men of Boston, to say

whether or not you count yourselves worthy to stand as his first-born.

Into this larger city, that is growing even while we speak, I ask you to take the mantle of that prophet, and smite the waters that divide us from the nobler, purer, better life; and you will find that with that mantle, that with that characteristic, you too can do the great works that he did. For — we cannot insist upon it too often — it is not the greatness of the gift that makes the man, nor makes his power; it is the faithfulness and self-consecration with which such gift as a man may have be used.

When we think of the new and better Church that is to slowly absorb the good in all, — that will, in its splendid growth, lay aside the childish things which once occupied it, — when we think how his spirit rejoiced in the thought of the kingdom of God, and how he chafed under the limitations of all ecclesiasticism, — then again we say, Shall that spirit be a power in the reorganization and upbuilding of the kingdom of Israel? Or shall it be only a memory, as the years go by?

It depends upon you. It depends upon you who have known him and loved him to say whether or not you will now stand as his first-born and carry into that nobler, better, more glorious Church the spirit of true catholicity, the spirit of brotherly love, the spirit of deep reverence, which was the glory of his life.

And indeed we might go on, almost without end, to speak of the different things in which that spirit may be carried. But the one thing needful is, that each of us should determine to make effective in his own life that beauty, and purity, and meekness, and diligence, and reverence, and love, which was the glory of our friend and master. Let us no longer cry, "My father, my father!" Let us rise above all personal grief. Let us rise above the sense of the overwhelming loss to the city. Let us not despair of Israel, but, taking up that characteristic which it is possible for us to lift, and claiming our place as the first-born, consecrating ourselves to the perpetuation of that spiritual property which has been bequeathed to us, let us cry, "Where is the Lord God of Phillips Brooks?" Not, Where is he? not, What does he do and think to-night? but, Where is the God that he loved and served? Where is the God that he made known to me? Is His hand weakened, or His arm shortened, that He cannot save?

No. Our friend and master is dead, as we say; but the God whom he served is alive forevermore. The face that cheered us, the hand that strengthened us, those are gone from us; but the everlasting beauty of the Divine life, and the almighty power of the Divine arm, those may be ours, as they were his.

Where is the Lord God? That is the only question we have to ask; and if we ask it, and strike the

waters that divide us from the nobler and better life that God has prepared for them who would enter into it, we shall find that those waters divide for us as they did for him, and, entering into the new life, in spite of our personal loss, and great grief, and moments of despondency, the kingdom of Israel shall be built.

This is the possibility and the glory of the first-born. God grant that it may be ours!

THE END.

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